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THE
P L A Y S
OF
S H A K S P E A R E.
—
VOL. II.

Sweet swan of Avon, what a sight it were,
To see thee in our waters yet appear ;
And make those flights upon the banks of Thames,
That so did take Eliza, and our James !

BEN JONSON.

If ever any author deserved the name of an *original*, it was Shakspeare. Homer himself drew not his art so immediately from the fountains of Nature ; it proceeded through Egyptian strainers and channels, and came to him not without some tincture of the learning, or some cast of the models, of those before him. The poetry of Shakspeare was inspiration indeed : he is not so much an imitator as an instrument of Nature ; and it is not so just to say that he speaks from her, as that she speaks through him.

POPE.

THE

PLAYS

of

SHAKESPEARE.

IN FOURTEEN VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

COMEDY OF ERRORS.

LONDON :

L. A. LEWIS, 125, FLEET STREET.

MDCCCXLI.

LONDON :
Printed by Maurice and Co., Howford Buildings,
Fenchurch-street.

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

1944-4 - Harry N. Davis '84

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II.

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HISTORICAL NOTICE
OF THE
MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

An old translation of *Il Pecorone*, by Giovanni Florentino, is supposed to have furnished Shakspeare with some of the incidents of this comedy.

Mr. Rowe informs us, that Queen Elizabeth was so well pleased with the admirable character of Falstaff in the two parts of *Henry IV.* that she commanded our author to continue it for one play more, and to show him in love; a task, which he is said to have completed in a fortnight, to the admiration of his royal patroness, who was afterwards very well pleased at the representation. This information, it is probable, came originally from Dryden, who, from his intimacy with Sir William Davenant, had an opportunity of learning many particulars concerning Shakspeare. Mr. Chalmers has endeavored to set aside the general tradition relative to this comedy, but does not appear to have succeeded.

Speaking of this play, Dr. Johnson remarks, that 'no task is harder than that of writing to the ideas of another. Shakspeare knew what the queen, if the story be true, seems not to have known;—that by any real passion of tenderness, the selfish craft, the careless jollity, and the lazy luxury of Falstaff must have suffered so much abatement, that little of his former cast would have remained. Falstaff could not love but

by ceasing to be Falstaff. He could only counterfeit love ; and his professions could be prompted, not by the love of pleasure, but of money. Thus the poet approached as near as he could to the work enjoined him : yet having, perhaps, in his former plays completed his own idea, seems not to have been able to give Falstaff all his former power of entertainment.

' This comedy is remarkable for the variety and number of the personages, who exhibit more characters appropriated and discriminated, than, perhaps, can be found in any other play. Whether Shakspeare was the first that produced on the English stage the effect of language distorted and depraved by provincial or foreign pronunciation, I cannot certainly decide. This mode of forming ridiculous characters can confer praise only on him who originally discovered it, for it requires not much of either wit or judgment: its success must be derived almost wholly from the player; but its power in a skilful mouth, even he that despises it is unable to resist.

' The conduct of this drama is deficient: the action begins and ends often before the conclusion, and the different parts might change places without inconvenience: but its general power; that power, by which all works of genius shall finally be tried, is such, that, perhaps, it never yet had reader or spectator, who did not think it too soon at an end.'

Dr. Johnson conjectures that this play should be read between King Henry IV. Part 2d. and King Henry V. while Mr. Malone would place it between the First and Second Parts of King Henry IV.

A R G U M E N T.

The vanity of sir John Falstaff having misinterpreted the hospitable attentions of two ladies at Windsor into an admiration for his person, he resolves to profit by his good fortune, but is betrayed by some discarded domestics, who revenge their dismissal by revealing their master's designs to the husbands of his mistresses. Page disregards the information altogether; while Ford, who had, for some time past, entertained unfounded suspicions of his wife's honor, resolves to ascertain the truth of the information. For this purpose, under the assumed name of Brook, he causes himself to be introduced to Falstaff, whom he artfully draws into the confession of an assignation which he had just before made with mistress Ford, who in the mean time had conspired with her friend to punish the knight for his infamous proposals. Ford, now supposing that he has sufficiently detected the infidelity of his wife, assembles his neighbors, in order to surprise Falstaff at the appointed interview: he is, however, conveyed away by the two wives in a basket with foul linen, and thrown into the Thames, where he narrowly escapes drowning. The suspicions of Ford are now somewhat abated; but when he again repairs to Falstaff as Brook, and learns the deception that has been practised on him, and the arrangements which have been made by his wife for a second visit from her admirer, his fury rekindles; he again solicits his friends to accompany him home, whence Falstaff is again conveyed in the disguise of an old witch, though not without suffering a severe cudgelling at the hands of the enraged Ford as a fortune-teller. A third assignation is now made with him in Windsor forest at midnight, where Falstaff, representing the spirit of a deceased huntsman, with horns on his head, is severely pinched by the accomplices of the plot, in the garb of fairies and hobgoblins; when the husbands, who are now made acquainted with the intention of their wives, rush from the place of their concealment; and, having sufficiently exposed and derided him, forgive him. The remainder of this comedy is occupied by the rivalry of Slender and Caius, for the hand of Page's daughter, who prefers a young gentleman named Fenton, whom she marries.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Sir JOHN FALSTAFF.

FENTON.

SHALLOW, a country justice.

SLENDER, cousin to Shallow.

Mr. FORD, } two gentlemen dwelling at Windsor.
Mr. PAGE,

WILLIAM PAGE, a boy, son to Mr. Page.

Sir HUGH EVANS, a Welsh parson.

Dr. CAIUS, a French physician.

HOST of the Garter Inn.

BARDOLPH, }
PISTOL, } followers of Falstaff.
NYM,

ROBIN, page to Falstaff.

SIMPLE, servant to Slender.

RUGBY, servant to Dr. Caius.

Mrs. FORD.

Mrs. PAGE.

Mrs. ANNE PAGE, her daughter, in love with Fenton.

Mrs. QUICKLY, servant to Dr. Caius.

Servants to Page, Ford, &c.

SCENE, Windsor ; and the parts adjacent.

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

A C T I.

SCENE I.

Windsor. Before Page's house.

Enter JUSTICE SHALLOW, SLENDER, and SIR HUGH EVANS.

Shal. Sir Hugh,¹ persuade me not ; I will make a Star-chamber² matter of it : if he were twenty sir John Falstaffs, he shall not abuse Robert Shallow, esquire.

Slen. In the county of Gloster, justice of peace, and *coram*.³

Shal. Ay, cousin Slender, and *Cust-alorum*.⁴

Slen. Ay, and *ratolorum* too ; and a gentleman born, master parson ; who writes himself *armigero* ;⁵ in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation, *armigero*.

¹ It was the custom in ancient times to give the title of 'Sir' to certain orders of the clergy as well as to knights.

² Ben Jonson intimates, that the Star-chamber had a right to take cognisance of routs and riots.

³ *Quorum.* Such a number of justices as is sufficient to transact business. ⁴ *Custos rotulorum.*

⁵ *Armiger*, esquire.

Shal. Ay, that I do; and have done any time these three hundred years.

Slen. All his successors, gone before him, have done 't; and all his ancestors, that come after him, may: they may give the dozen white luces¹ in their coat.

Shal. It is an old coat.

Evans. The dozen white louses do become an old coat well; it agrees well, passant:² it is a familiar beast to man, and signifies—love.³

Shal. The luce is the fresh fish; the salt fish is an old coat.⁴

Slen. I may quarter, coz?

Shal. You may, by marrying.

Evans. It is marring indeed, if he quarter it.

Shal. Not a whit.

Evans. Yes, per-lady;⁵ if he has a quarter of your coat, there is but three skirts for yourself, in my simple conjectures: but that is all one. If sir John Falstaff have committed disparagements unto you, I am of the church, and will be glad to do my benevolence, to make atonements and compromises between you.

Shal. The Council⁶ shall hear it; it is a riot.

¹ Full-grown pikes or jacks. ² By the way.

³ Probably signifying, that this little animal deserts not man in his distress, but rather sticks closer to him in his adversity.

⁴ 'That is, the fresh fish is the coat of an ancient family; and the salt fish is the coat of a merchant grown rich by trading over the sea.'—Johnson. ⁵ By our lady.

⁶ The court of Star-chamber.

Evans. It is not meet the Council hear a riot ; there is no fear of Got in a riot : the Council, look you, shall desire to hear the fear of Got, and not to hear a riot ; take your vizaments¹ in that.

Shal. Ha ! o' my life, if I were young again, the sword should end it.

Evans. It is better that friends is the sword, and end it : and there is also another device in my brain, which, peradventure, brings goot disretions with it. There is Anne Page, which is daughter to master George Page, which is pretty virginity.²

Slen. Mistress Anne Page ? She has brown hair, and speaks small³ like a woman.

Evans. It is that fery person for all the 'orld, as just as you will desire ; and seven hundred pounds of monies, and gold, and silver, is her grandsire, upon his death's-bed, (Got deliver to a joyful resurrections !) give, when she is able to overtake seventeen years old : it were a goot motion, if we leave our pribbles and prabbles, and desire a marriage between master Abraham and mistress Anne Page.

Shal. Did her grandsire leave her seven hundred pound ?

Evans. Ay, and her father is make her a better penny.

Shal. I know the young gentlewoman ; she has good gifts.

¹ Take counsel.

² A pretty maiden.

³ Soft, low.

Evans. Seven hundred pounds, and possibilities,¹ is good gifts.

Shal. Well, let us see honest master Page. Is Falstaff there?

Evans. Shall I tell you a lie? I do despise a liar, as I do despise one that is false; or, as I despise one that is not true. The knight, sir John, is there; and, I beseech you, be ruled by your well-willers. I will peat the door [*knocks*] for master Page. What, hoa! Got pless your house here!

Enter PAGE.

Page. Who's there?

Evans. Here is Got's blessing, and your friend, and justice Shallow; and here young master Slender; that, peradventures, shall tell you another tale, if matters grow to your likings.

Page. I am glad to see your worships well: I thank you for my venison, master Shallow.

Shal. Master Page, I am glad to see you; much good do it your good heart! I wished your venison better; it was ill killed.—How doth good mistress Page?—and I thank you always with my heart, la; with my heart.

Page. Sir, I thank you.

Shal. Sir, I thank you; by yea and no, I do.

Page. I am glad to see you, good master Slender.

¹ Expectations.

Slen. How does your fallow greyhound, sir? I heard say, he was outrun on Cotsall.¹

Page. It could not be judged, sir.

Slen. You 'll not confess, you 'll not confess.

Shal. That he will not;—'tis your fault, 'tis your fault.—'Tis a good dog.

Page. A cur, sir.

Shal. Sir, he 's a good dog, and a fair dog. Can there be more said? he is good and fair.—Is sir John Falstaff here?

Page. Sir, he is within; and I would I could do a good office between you.

Evans. It is spoke as a christians ought to speak.

Shal. He hath wronged me, master Page.

Page. Sir, he doth in some sort confess it.

Shal. If it be confessed, it is not redressed; is not that so, master Page? He hath wronged me;—indeed, he hath;—at a word, he hath;—believe me;—Robert Shallow, esquire, saith, he is wronged.

Page. Here comes sir John.

Enter SIR JOHN FALSTAFF, BARDOLPH, NYM, and PISTOL.

Fal. Now, master Shallow; you 'll complain of me to the king?

Shal. Knight, you have beaten my men, killed my deer, and broke open my lodge.

Fal. But not kissed your keeper's daughter?

¹ Cotswold, in Gloucestershire.

Shal. Tut, a pin ! this shall be answered.

Fal. I will answer it straight :—I have done all this.—That is now answered.

Shal. The Council shall know this.

Fal. 'Twere better for you, if it were known in counsel : you 'll be laughed at.

Evans. *Pauca verba*, sir John ; good worts.

Fal. Good worts ! good cabbage.¹—Slender, I broke your head. What matter have you against me ?

Slen. Marry, sir, I have matter in my head against you ; and against your coney-catching² rascals, Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol. They carried me to the tavern, and made me drunk, and afterwards picked my pocket.

Bar. You Banbury cheese !³

Slen. Ay, it is no matter.

Pis. How now, Mephophilus ?⁴

Slen. Ay, it is no matter.

Nym. Slice, I say ! *pauca, pauca* ;⁵ slice ! that 's my humor.

Slen. Where 's Simple, my man ?—can you tell, cousin ?

Evans. Peace, I pray you ! Now let us under-

¹ Worts was the ancient name of all the cabbage kind.

² Sharpers were called coney-catchers.

³ Cheese consisting of nothing but paring : in allusion to the thin carcase of Slender.

⁴ The name of a familiar spirit in the old story of Doctor Faustus. ⁵ Few words.

stand. There is three umpires in this matter, as I understand : that is—master Page, *fidelicet*, master Page ; and there is myself, *fidelicet*, myself ; and the three party is, lastly and finally, mine host of the Garter.

Page. We three, to hear it, and end it between them.

Evans. Fery goot : I will make a prief of it in my note-book ; and we will afterwards 'orke upon the cause, with as great discreetly as we can.

Fal. Pistol,—

Pis. He hears with ears.

Evans. The tevil and his tam ! what phrase is this, ‘ He hears with ear ? ’ Why, it is affectations.

Fal. Pistol, did you pick master Slender’s purse ?

Slen. Ay, by these gloves, did he, (or I would I might never come in mine own great chamber again else) of seven groats in mill-sixpences,¹ and two Edward shovel-boards,² that cost me two shilling and two pence a-piece of Yead Miller, by these gloves.

Fal. Is this true, Pistol ?

Evans. No ; it is false, if it is a pick-purse.

Pis. Ha, thou mountain-foreigner !—Sir John, and master mine,

¹ Mill-sixpences were used by way of counters to cast up money.

² The broad shillings of Edward the Sixth, much used in the game of shuffle-board.

I combat challenge of this latten bilbo : ¹
 Word of denial in thy labras ² here ;
 Word of denial : froth and scum, thou liest.

Slen. By these gloves, then 'twas he.

Nym. Be avised,³ sir, and pass good humors : I will say, 'marry trap' with you,⁴ if you run the nuthook's humor on me ; ⁵ that is the very note ⁶ of it.

Slen. By this hat, then he in the red face had it : for though I cannot remember what I did when you made me drunk, yet I am not altogether an ass.

Fal. What say you, Scarlet and John ? ⁷

Bar. Why, sir, for my part, I say, the gentleman had drunk himself out of his five sentences.

Evans. It is his five senses : fie, what the ignorance is !

Bar. And being fap,⁸ sir, was, as they say, cashiered ; and so conclusions passed the careires.⁹

Slen. Ay, you spake in Latin then too ; but 'tis no matter : I 'll ne'er be drunk whilst I live again, but in honest, civil, godly company, for this trick : if I be drunk, I 'll be drunk with those that have the fear of God, and not with drunken knaves.

¹ This blade as thin as a lath. Latten is a mixed metal, made of copper and calamine. ² Lips.

³ Cautious.

⁴ I will catch you in your own trap.

⁵ If you say I am a thief.

⁶ Truth.

⁷ In allusion to Bardolph's red face.

⁸ Drunk.

⁹ 'And so, in the end, he reeled about with a circuitous motion, like a horse, passing a carier.'—Malone. 'To pass a carier' was a technical term, signifying running a career.

Evans. So Got 'udge me, that is a virtuous mind.

Fal. You hear all these matters denied, gentlemen; you hear it.

Enter ANNE PAGE with wine; MRS. FORD and MRS.

PAGE following.

Page. Nay, daughter, carry the wine in; we'll drink within. [Exit Anne Page.

Slēn. O heaven! this is mistress Anne Page.

Page. How now, mistress Ford?

Fal. Mistress Ford, by my troth, you are very well met: by your leave, good mistress. [kissing her.

Page. Wife, bid these gentlemen welcome.— Come, we have a hot venison pasty to dinner; come, gentlemen, I hope we shall drink down all unkindness. [Exeunt all but Shallow, Slender, and Evans.

Slēn. I had rather than forty shillings, I had my book of Songs and Sonnets here.—

Enter SIMPLE.

How now, Simple! where have you been? I must wait on myself, must I? You have not The Book of Riddles about you, have you?

Sim. Book of Riddles! why, did you not lend it to Alice Shortcake upon Allhallowmas last, a fortnight afore Michaelmas?¹

Shal. Come, coz; come, coz; we stay for you.

¹ Allhallowmas is almost five weeks after Michaelmas. Shakespeare probably intended to blunder.

A word with you, coz ; marry, this, coz. There is, as 'twere, a tender, a kind of tender, made afar off by sir Hugh here ;—Do you understand me ?

Slen. Ay, sir, you shall find me reasonable ; if it be so, I shall do that that is reason.

Shal. Nay, but understand me.

Slen. So I do, sir.

Evans. Give ear to his motions,¹ master Slender : I will description the matter to you, if you be capacity of it.

Slen. Nay, I will do as my cousin Shallow says : I pray you, pardon me ; he 's a justice of peace in his country, simple though I stand here.

Evans. But that is not the question : the question is concerning your marriage.

Shal. Ay, there 's the point, sir.

Evans. Marry, is it ; the very point of it ; to mistress Anne Page.

Slen. Why, if it be so, I will marry her, upon any reasonable demands.

Evans. But can you affection the 'oman ? Let us command to know that of your mouth, or of your lips ; for divers philosophers hold, that the lips is parcel of the mouth ;—therefore, precisely, can you carry your good will to the maid ?

Shal. Cousin Abraham Slender, can you love her ?

Slen. I hope, sir, I will do, as it shall become one that would do reason.

¹ Proposal.

Evans. Nay, Got's lords and his ladies, you must speak possitable,¹ if you can carry her your desires towards her.

Shal. That you must. Will you, upon good dowry, marry her?

Slen. I will do a greater thing than that, upon your request, cousin, in any reason.

Shal. Nay, conceive me, conceive me, sweet coz ; what I do, is to pleasure you, coz. Can you love the maid ?

Slen. I will marry her, sir, at your request ; but if there be no great love in the beginning, yet Heaven may decrease it upon better acquaintance, when we are married, and have more occasion to know one another. I hope, upon familiarity will grow more contempt : but if you say, 'Marry her,' I will marry her, that I am freely dissolved, and dissolutely.

Evans. It is a fery discretion answer ; save, the faul' is in the 'ort dissolutely : the 'ort is, according to our meaning, resolutely ;—his meaning is good.

Shal. Ay, I think my cousin meant well.

Slen. Ay, or else I would be hanged, la.

Re-enter ANNE PAGE.

Shal. Here comes fair mistress Anne.—Would I were young, for your sake, mistress Anne !

¹ Positively.

Anne. The dinner is on the table ; my father desires your worships' company.

Shal. I will wait on him, fair mistress Anne.

Evans. Od's pleased will ! I will not be absence at the grace. [*Exeunt Shallow and Sir H. Evans.*]

Anne. Will 't please your worship to come in, sir ?

Slen. No, I thank you, forsooth, heartily ; I am very well.

Anne. The dinner attends you, sir.

Slen. I am not a-hungry, I thank you, forsooth.—Go, sirrah, for all you are my man, go, wait upon my cousin Shallow. [*Exit Simple.*] A justice of peace sometime may be beholden to his friend for a man :—I keep but three men and a boy yet, till my mother be dead. But what though ? yet I live like a poor gentleman born.

Anne. I may not go in without your worship : they will not sit, till you come.

Slen. I 'faith, I 'll eat nothing ; I thank you as much as though I did.

Anne. I pray you, sir, walk in.

Slen. I had rather walk here, I thank you : I bruised my shin the other day with playing at sword and dagger with a master of fence, (three veneys¹ for a dish of stewed prunes) and, by my troth, I cannot abide the smell of hot meat since. Why do your dogs bark so ? be there bears i' the town ?

¹ Three bouts or hits : a technical term.

Anne. I think, there are, sir; I heard them talked of.

Slen. I love the sport well; but I shall as soon quarrel at it as any man in England.—You are afraid, if you see the bear loose, are you not?

Anne. Ay, indeed, sir.

Slen. That's meat and drink to me now: I have seen Sackerson¹ loose twenty times; and have taken him by the chain: but, I warrant you, the women have so cried and shrieked at it, that it passed:²—but women, indeed, cannot abide 'em; they are very ill-favored rough things.

Re-enter PAGE.

Page. Come, gentle master Slender, come; we stay for you.

Slen. I'll eat nothing, I thank you, sir.

Page. By cock and pye,³ you shall not choose, sir: come, come.

Slen. Nay, pray you, lead the way.

Page. Come on, sir.

Slen. Mistress Anne, yourself shall go first.

Anne. Not I, sir; pray you, keep on.

Slen. Truly, I will not go first; truly, la: I will not do you that wrong.

¹ The name of a bear, exhibited, in our author's time, at Paris Garden, in Southwark.

² It surpassed all description. ³ A popular adjuration.

Anne. I pray you, sir.

Slen. I'll rather be unmannerly than troublesome :
you do yourself wrong, indeed, la. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

The same.

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS and SIMPLE.

Evans. Go your ways, and ask of Doctor Caius' house, which is the way : and there dwells one mistress Quickly, which is in the manner of his nurse, or his dry nurse, or his cook, or his laundry, his washer, and his wringer.

Sim. Well, sir.

Evans. Nay, it is better yet :—give her this letter ; for it is a 'oman that altogether's acquaintance with mistress Anne Page : and the letter is, to desire and require her to solicit your master's desires to mistress Anne Page : I pray you, be gone ; I will make an end of my dinner : there's pippins and cheese to come. [Exit.]

SCENE III.

A room in the Garter Inn.

*Enter FALSTAFF, HOST, BARDOLPH, NYM, PISTOL,
and ROBIN.*

Fal. Mine host of the Garter,—

Host. What says my bully-rook ?¹ speak scholarly, and wisely.

Fal. Truly, mine host, I must turn away some of my followers.

Host. Discard, bully Hercules ; cashier ; let them wag ; trot, trot.

Fal. I sit at ten pounds a week.

Host. Thou 'rt an emperor, Cæsar, Keisar,² and Pheezar.³ I will entertain Bardolph ; he shall draw, he shall tap : said I well, bully Hector ?

Fal. Do so, good mine host.

Host. I have spoke ; let him follow. Let me see thee froth, and lime :⁴ I am at a word ; follow.

[*Exit Host.*

Fal. Bardolph, follow him ; a tapster is a good trade. An old cloak makes a new jerkin ; a withered servingman, a fresh tapster. Go ; adieu.

Bar. It is a life that I have desired ; I will thrive.

[*Exit Bardolph.*

Pis. O base Gongarian⁵ wight ! wilt thou the spigot wield ?

¹ The latter part of this compound title is taken from the rooks at the game of chess.

² An emperor in Germany is named Keisar.

³ Pheezar is a made word from 'pheeze,' i. e. to curry, to fleece. 'I 'll pheeze you,' says Sly to the hostess in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

⁴ 'Frothing beer and liming sack were tricks practised in the time of Shakspeare : the first was done by putting soap into the bottom of the tankard when they drew the beer ; the other, by mixing lime with the sack, to make it sparkle in the glass.'—Steevens. ⁵ For Hungarian.

Nym. He was gotten in drink. Is not the humor conceited? His mind is not heroic, and there's the humor of it.

Fal. I am glad, I am so acquit of this tinder-box: his thefts were too open: his filching was like an unskilful singer, he kept not time.

Nym. The good humor is, to steal at a minute's rest.¹

Pis. Convey, the wise it call. Steal! foh; a fico² for the phrase!

Fal. Well, sirs, I am almost out at heels.

Pis. Why, then, let kibes³ ensue.

Fal. There is no remedy; I must coney-catch;⁴ I must shift.

Pis. Young ravens must have food.

Fal. Which of you know Ford of this town?

Pis. I ken the wight; he is of substance good.

Fal. My honest lads, I will tell you what I am about.

Pis. Two yards, and more.

Fal. No quips⁵ now, Pistol; indeed I am in the waist two yards about: but I am now about no waste; I am about thrift. Briefly, I do mean to make love to Ford's wife: I spy entertainment in her; she discourses, she carves, she gives the leer of invitation: I can construe the action of her familiar

¹ When watchfulness is off its guard, and reposes but for a minute. ² Fig. ³ Ulcerated chilblains.

⁴ Cheat. ⁵ Taunts.

style ; and the hardest voice of her behavior, to be Englished rightly, is, 'I am sir John Falstaff's.'

Pis. He hath studied her well, and translated her well ; out of honesty into English.

Nym. The anchor is deep :¹ will that humor pass ?

Fal. Now, the report goes, she has all the rule of her husband's purse ; she hath legions of angels.²

Pis. As many devils entertain ;³ and, 'To her, boy,' say I.

Nym. The humor rises ; it is good : humor me the angels.

Fal. I have writ me here a letter to her : and here another to Page's wife ; who even now gave me good eyes too, examined my parts with most judicious eyliads :⁴ sometimes the beam of her view gilded my foot, sometimes my portly belly.

Pis. Then did the sun on dunghill shine.

Nym. I thank thee for that humor.

Fal. O, she did so course o'er my exteriors with such a greedy intention, that the appetite of her eye did seem to scorch me up like a burning-glass ! Here's another letter to her : she bears the purse too ; she is a region in Guiana, all gold and bounty. I will be cheater⁵ to them both, and they shall be

¹ The scheme is well laid.

² A gold coin, impressed with an angel, rated at ten shillings.

³ Do you retain in your service as many devils as she has angels.

⁴ Eyelids.

⁵ Escheatour, an officer in the Exchequer.

exchequers to me ; they shall be my East and West Indies, and I will trade to them both. Go, bear thou this letter to mistress Page ; and thou this to mistress Ford : we will thrive, lads, we will thrive.

Pis. Shall I sir Pandarus of Troy become,
And by my side wear steel ? then, Lucifer take all !

Nym. I will run no base humor : here, take the humor-letter ; I will keep the 'havior of reputation.

Fal. Hold, sirrah, [to Rob.] bear you these letters tightly ;¹

Sail like my pinnace to these golden shores.—
Rogues, hence, avaunt ! vanish like hail-stones, go ;
Trudge, plod, away, o' the hoof ; seek shelter, pack !
Falstaff will learn the humor of this age,
French thrift, you rogues ; myself, and skirted page.

[*Exeunt Falstaff and Robin.*]

Pis. Let vultures gripe thy guts ! for gourd, and fullam² holds,
And high and low³ beguile the rich and poor :
Tester I 'll have in pouch,⁴ when thou shalt lack,
Base Phrygian Turk !

Nym. I have operations in my head, which be humors of revenge.

Pis. Wilt thou revenge ?

Nym. By welkin, and her star !

Pis. With wit, or steel ?

¹ Cleverly, adroitly.

² Certain false dice known by the name of gourd and fullam.

³ Dice called high men and low men.

⁴ Sixpence I 'll have in my pocket.

Nym. With both the humors, I :
I will discuss the humor of this love to Page.

Pis. And I to Ford shall eke ¹ unfold,
How Falstaff, varlet vile,
His dove will prove, his gold will hold,
And his soft couch defile.

Nym. My humor shall not cool : I will incense ²
Page to deal with poison ; I will possess him with
yellowness,³ for the revolt of mien ⁴ is dangerous :
that is my true humor.

Pis. Thou art the Mars of malcontents : I second
thee ; troop on. [Exit.]

SCENE IV.

A room in Dr. Caius's house.

Enter MRS. QUICKLY, SIMPLE, and RUGBY.

Mrs. Quick. What ; John Rugby !—I pray thee,
go to the casement, and see if you can see my master,
master Doctor Caius, coming ; if he do, i'faith, and
find any body in the house, here will be an old
abusing of God's patience, and the king's English.

Rug. I'll go watch. [Exit Rugby.]

Mrs. Quick. Go ; and we'll have a posset for't
soon at night, in faith, at the latter end of a sea-coal
fire. An honest, willing, kind fellow, as ever servant
shall come in house withal ; and, I warrant you, no

¹ Likewise.

² Instigate.

³ Jealousy.

⁴ Change of countenance.

tell-tale, nor no breed-bate : ¹ his worst fault is, that he is given to prayer; he is something peevish ² that way: but nobody but has his fault;—but let that pass. Peter Simple, you say your name is ?

Sim. Ay, for fault of a better.

Mrs. Quick. And master Slender's your master?

Sim. Ay, forsooth.

Mrs. Quick. Does he not wear a great round beard, like a glover's paring-knife?

Sim. No, forsooth: he hath but a little wee face, with a little yellow beard; a Cain-colored ³ beard.

Mrs. Quick. A softly-sprighted man, ⁴ is he not?

Sim. Ay, forsooth: but he is as tall ⁵ a man of his hands, as any is between this and his head; he hath fought with a warrener.

Mrs. Quick. How say you?—O, I should remember him. Does he not hold up his head, as it were, and strut in his gait?

Sim. Yes, indeed, does he.

Mrs. Quick. Well, Heaven send Anne Page no worse fortune! Tell master parson Evans, I will do what I can for your master: Anne is a good girl, and I wish—

Re-enter RUGBY.

Rug. Out, alas! here comes my master.

¹ No breeder of strife.

² Foolish.

³ Cain and Judas were represented with yellow beards in old tapestries and pictures.

⁴ A man of a mild disposition.

⁵ Courageous.

Mrs. Quick. We shall all be shent.¹ Run in here, good young man; go into this closet. [*shuts Simple in the closet.*] He will not stay long.—What, John Rugby! John, what, John, I say!—Go, John, go inquire for my master; I doubt, he be not well, that he comes not home:—‘ and down, down, adown-a,’ &c. [sings.]

Enter DR. CAIUS.

Caius. Vat is you sing? I do not like dese toys. Pray you, go and vetch me in my closet *un boitier verd*; a box, a green-a box. Do intend vat I speak? a green-a box.

Mrs. Quick. Ay, forsooth, I ’ll fetch it you. I am glad he went not in himself: if he had found the young man, he would have been horn-mad.² [*aside.*]

Caius. *Fe, fe, fe, fe ! ma foi, il fait fort chaud.*
Je m'en vais à la Cour,—la grande affaire.

Mrs. Quick. Is it this, sir?

Caius. *Ouy ; mette le au mon pocket ; Dépêche,* quickly.—Vere is dat knave Rugby?

Mrs. Quick. What, John Rugby! John!

Rug. Here, sir.

Caius. You are John Rugby, and you are Jack Rugby. Come, take-a your rapier, and come after my heel to de court.

Rug. 'Tis ready, sir, here in the porch.

¹ Scolded, roughly treated.

² As angry as a man who has discovered the infidelity of his wife.

Caius. By my trot, I tarry too long.—Od's me !
Qu'ay j'oublie? dere is some simples in my closet,
 dat I vill not for the varld I shall leave behind.

Mrs. Quick. Ah me ! he 'll find the young man
 there, and be mad.

Caius. *O diable, diable !* vat is in my closet?—Vil-
 lany ! *larron !* [pulling *Simple* out.] Rugby, my
 rapier.

Mrs. Quick. Good master, be content.

Caius. Verefore shall I be content-a ?

Mrs. Quick. The young man is an honest man.

Caius. Vat shall the honest man do in my closet?
 Dere is no honest man dat shall come in my closet.

Mrs. Quick. I beseech you, be not so phlegmatic ;¹
 hear the truth of it. He came of an errand to me
 from parson Hugh.

Caius. Vell.

Sim. Ay, forsooth, to desire her to—

Mrs. Quick. Peace, I pray you.

Caius. Peace-a your tongue.—Speak-a your tale.

Sim. To desire this honest gentlewoman, your
 maid, to speak a good word to mistress Anne Page
 for my master, in the way of marriage.

Mrs. Quick. This is all, indeed, la ; but I 'll ne'er
 put my finger in the fire, and need not.

Caius. Sir Hugh send-a you ?—Rugby, *baillez* me
 some paper. Tarry you a little-a while. [writes.]

Mrs. Quick. I am glad he is so quiet : if he had

¹ Mistress Quickly probably means hasty.

been thoroughly moved, you should have heard him so loud, and so melancholy ;—But notwithstanding, man, I 'll do your master what good I can : and the very yea and the no is, the French doctor, my master,—I may call him my master, look you, for I keep his house ; and I wash, wring, brew, bake, scour, dress meat and drink, make the beds, and do all myself ;—

Sim. 'Tis a great charge, to come under one body's hand.

Mrs. Quick. Are you avised¹ o' that? you shall find it a great charge : and to be up early and down late ;—but notwithstanding, (to tell you in your ear ; I would have no words of it) my master himself is in love with mistress Anne Page : but notwithstanding that,—I know Anne's mind,—that's neither here nor there.

Caius. You jack'nape ; give-a dis letter to sir Hugh ; by gar, it is a shallenge : I vill cut his troat in de park ; and I vill teach a scurvy jack-a-nape priest to meddle or make :—you may be gone ; it is not good you tarry here :—by gar, I vill cut all his two stones ; by gar, he shall not have a stone to trow at his dog.

[*Exit Simple.*]

Mrs. Quick. Alas, he speaks but for his friend.

Caius. It is no matter-a for dat :—do not you tell-a me dat I shall have Anne Page for myself ?—

¹ Informed.

by gar, I vill kill de Jack¹ priest; and I have appointed mine host of *de Jarterre* to measure our weapon :—by gar, I vill myself have Anne Page.

Mrs. Quick. Sir, the maid loves you, and all shall be well: we must give folks leave to prate. What, the good-jer!

Caius. Rugby, come to the court vit me.—By gar, if I have not Anne Page, I shall turn your head out of my door.—Follow my heels, Rugby.

[*Exeunt Caius and Rugby.*]

Mrs. Quick. You shall have An fools-head of your own. No, I know Anne's mind for that: never a woman in Windsor knows more of Anne's mind than I do; nor can do more than I do with her, I thank Heaven.

Fen. [within.] Who's within there, ho?

Mrs. Quick. Who's there, I trow? Come near the house, I pray you.

Enter FENTON.

Fen. How now, good woman; how dost thou?

Mrs. Quick. The better, that it pleases your good worship to ask.

Fen. What news? how does pretty mistress Anne?

Mrs. Quick. In truth, sir, and she is pretty, and honest, and gentle; and one that is your friend, I

¹ In our author's time Jack was a term of contempt.

can tell you that by the way; I praise Heaven for it.

Fen. Shall I do any good, thinkest thou? Shall I not lose my suit?

Mrs. Quick. Troth, sir, all is in his hands above: but notwithstanding, master Fenton, I'll be sworn on a book, she loves you.—Have not your worship a wart above your eye?

Fen. Yes, marry, have I; what of that?

Mrs. Quick. Well, thereby hangs a tale;—good faith, it is such another Nan;—but, I detest,¹ an honest maid as ever broke bread.—We had an hour's talk of that wart; and I shall never laugh but in that maid's company!—But, indeed, she is given too much to allicholly² and musing. But for you—Well, go to.

Fen. Well, I shall see her to-day. Hold, there's money for thee; let me have thy voice in my behalf: if thou seest her before me, command me—

Mrs. Quick. Will I? i'faith, that we will: and I will tell your worship more of the wart, the next time we have confidence; and of other wooers.

Fen. Well, farewell; I am in great haste now.

[*Exit.*]

Mrs. Quick. Farewell to your worship.—Truly, an honest gentleman; but Anne loves him not; for I know Anne's mind as well as another does:—Out upon 't! what have I forgot?

[*Exit.*]

¹ Protest.

² Melancholy.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Before Page's house.

Enter MRS. PAGE, with a letter.

Mrs. Page. What ! have I 'scaped love-letters in the holyday time of my beauty, and am I now a subject for them ? Let me see : [reads.]

' Ask me no reason why I love you ; for though love use reason for his precisian,¹ he admits him not for his counsellor. You are not young, no more am I ; go to then, there's sympathy : you are merry, so am I ; Ha ! ha ! then there's more sympathy : you love sack, and so do I ; Would you desire better sympathy ? Let it suffice thee, mistress Page, (at the least, if the love of a soldier can suffice) that I love thee. I will not say, pity me, 'tis not a soldier-like phrase ; but I say, love me. By me,

Thine own true knight,
By day or night,
Or any kind of light,
With all his might,
For thee to fight.

JOHN FALSTAFF.'

What a Herod of Jewry is this !—O wicked, wicked

¹ Though love permit reason to tell what is fit to be done. By precisian is meant one who pretends to extraordinary sanctity.

world!—one that is well nigh worn to pieces with age, to show himself a young gallant! What an unweighed¹ behaviour hath this Flemish drunkard picked (with the devil's name) out of my conversation, that he dares in this manner assay me? Why, he hath not been thrice in my company!—What should I say to him?—I was then frugal of my mirth:—Heaven forgive me!—Why, I'll exhibit a bill in the parliament for the putting down of fat men. How shall I be revenged on him? for revenged I will be, as sure as his guts are made of puddings.

Enter MRS. FORD.

Mrs. Ford. Mistress Page! trust me, I was going to your house.

Mrs. Page. And, trust me, I was coming to you. You look very ill.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, I'll ne'er believe that; I have to show to the contrary.

Mrs. Page. 'Faith, but you do, in my mind.

Mrs. Ford. Well, I do then; yet, I say, I could show you to the contrary. O, mistress Page, give me some counsel!

Mrs. Page. What's the matter, woman?

Mrs. Ford. O woman, if it were not for one trifling respect, I could come to such honor!

Mrs. Page. Hang the trifle, woman: take the

¹ Heedless.

honor. What is it?—dispense with trifles;—what is it?

Mrs. Ford. If I would but go to hell for an eternal moment, or so, I could be knighted.

Mrs. Page. What?—thou liest!—Sir Alice Ford!—These knights will hack; and so thou shouldest not alter the article of thy gentry.¹

Mrs. Ford. We burn day-light:²—here, read, read;—perceive how I might be knighted.—I shall think the worse of fat men, as long as I have an eye to make difference of men's liking.³ And yet he would not swear; praised women's modesty; and gave such orderly and well-behaved reproof to all uncomeliness, that I would have sworn his disposition would have gone to the truth of his words: but they do no more adhere and keep place together, than the hundredth psalm to the tune of 'Green Sleeves.'⁴ What tempest, I trow, threw this whale, with so many tuns of oil in his belly, ashore at Windsor? How shall I be revenged on him? I think, the best way were to entertain him with hope, till the wicked fire of lust have melted him in his own grease.—Did you ever hear the like?

Mrs. Page. Letter for letter, but that the name of Page and Ford differs!—To thy great comfort in

¹ These knights will hack, i. e. will become cheap and vulgar, and therefore I advise you not to sully your gentry by becoming one. ² We have more proof than we want.

³ Condition of body.

⁴ A favorite tune in our author's time.

SCENE I.

OF WINDSOR.

this mystery of ill opinions, here 's the twin-brow
of thy letter : but let thine inherit first ; for, I pro-
test, mine never shall. I warrant, he hath a thou-
sand of these letters, writ with blank space for dif-
ferent names, (sure more) and these are of the
second edition. He will print them out of doubt ;
for he cares not what he puts into the press, when
he would put us two. I had rather be a giantess,
and lie under mount Pelion. Well, I will find you
twenty lascivious turtles, ere one chaste man.

Mrs. Ford. Why, this is the very same ; the very
hand, the very words. What doth he think of us ?

Mrs. Page. Nay, I know not ; it makes me al-
most ready to wrangle with mine own honesty. I 'll
entertain myself like one that I am not acquainted
withal ; for, sure, unless he knew some strain¹ in
me, that I know not myself, he would never have
boarded me in this fury.

Mrs. Ford. Boarding, call you it ? I 'll be sure to
keep him above deck.

Mrs. Page. So will I ; if he come under my
hatches, I 'll never to sea again. Let 's be revenged
on him : let 's appoint him a meeting ; give him a
show of comfort in his suit ; and lead him on with a
fine-baited delay, till he hath pawned his horses to
mine host of the Garter.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, I will consent to act any vil-
lany against him, that may not sully the chariness

¹ Fault.

of our honesty.¹ O, that my husband saw this letter! it would give eternal food to his jealousy.

Mrs. Page. Why, look, where he comes; and my good man too: he's as far from jealousy, as I am from giving him cause; and that, I hope, is an unmeasurable distance.

Mrs. Ford. You are the happier woman.

Mrs. Page. Let's consult together against this greasy knight. Come hither. [they retire.

Enter FORD, PISTOL, PAGE, and NYM.

Ford. Well, I hope, it be not so.

Pis. Hope is a curtail dog² in some affairs: Sir John affects thy wife.

Ford. Why, sir, my wife is not young.

Pis. He wooes both high and low, both rich and poor,

Both young and old, one with another, Ford; He loves the gally-mawfry;³ Ford, perpend.⁴

Ford. Love my wife?

Pis. With liver burning hot. Prevent, or go thou, Like Sir Actæon he, with Ringwood at thy heels:— O, odious is the name!

Ford. What name, sir?

Pis. The horn, I say. Farewell.

Take heed; have open eye; for thieves do foot by night:

¹ Caution which our honor requires.

² A dog that misses his game.

³ A medley.

⁴ Attend to my advice.

Take heed, ere summer comes, or cuckoo-birds do
sing.—

Away, sir corporal Nym.—

Believe it, Page; he speaks sense. [Exit Pistol.]

Ford. I will be patient; I will find out this.

Nym. And this is true: [to *Page.*] I like not the humor of lying. He hath wronged me in some humors: I should have borne the humored letter to her; but I have a sword, and it shall bite upon my necessity.¹ He loves your wife; there's the short and the long. My name is corporal Nym; I speak, and I avouch. 'Tis true:—my name is Nym, and Falstaff loves your wife.—Adieu; I love not the humor of bread and cheese; and there's the humor of it. Adieu. [Exit *Nym.*]

Page. 'The humor of it,' quoth 'a! here's a fellow frights humor out of his wits.

Ford. I will seek out Falstaff.

Page. I never heard such a drawling, affecting rogue.

Ford. If I do find it, well.

Page. I will not believe such a Cataian,² though the priest o' the town commended him for a true man.

Ford. 'Twas a good sensible fellow. Well.

Page. How now, Meg?

¹ My sword shall bite when my need drives me to unlawful expedients.

² The Chinese, anciently called Cataians, were expert sharpers.

Mrs. Page. Whither go you, George?—Hark you.

Mrs. Ford. How now, sweet Frank! why art thou melancholy?

Ford. I melancholy! I am not melancholy.—Get you home, go.

Mrs. Ford. Faith, thou hast some crotchets¹ in thy head now.—Will you go, mistress Page?

Mrs. Page. Have with you.—You'll come to dinner, George?—Look, who comes yonder: she shall be our messenger to this paltry knight.

[aside to *Mrs. Ford.*]

Enter MRS. QUICKLY.

Mrs. Ford. Trust me, I thought on her: she'll fit it.

Mrs. Page. You are come to see my daughter Anne?

Mrs. Quick. Ay, forsooth; and, I pray, how does good mistress Anne?

Mrs. Page. Go in with us, and see; we have an hour's talk with you.

[*Exeunt Mrs. Page, Mrs. Ford, and Mrs. Quickly.*]

Page. How now, master Ford?

Ford. You heard what this knave told me; did you not?

Page. Yes; and you heard what the other told me?

¹ Conceits.

Ford. Do you think there is truth in them ?

Page. Hang 'em, slaves ! I do not think the knight would offer it : but these that accuse him in his intent towards our wives, are a yoke of his discarded men ; very rogues, now they be out of service.

Ford. Were they his men ?

Page. Marry, were they.

Ford. I like it never the better for that.—Does he lie at the Garter ?

Page. Ay, marry, does he. If he should intend this voyage towards my wife, I would turn her loose to him ; and what he gets more of her than sharp words, let it lie on my head.

Ford. I do not misdoubt my wife ; but I would be loath to turn them together. A man may be too confident : I would have nothing lie on my head :¹ I cannot be thus satisfied.

Page. Look, where my ranting host of the Garter comes : there is either liquor in his pate, or money in his purse, when he looks so merrily.—How now, mine host ?

Enter HOST and SHALLOW.

Host. How now, bully-rook ? thou 'rt a gentleman : cavalero-justice,² I say.

Shal. I follow, mine host, I follow.—Good even,

¹ In allusion to the cuckold's horns.

² Shallow was a justice of peace.

and twenty, good master Page! Master Page, will you go with us? we have sport in hand.

Host. Tell him, cavalero-justice; tell him, bully-rook.

Shal. Sir, there is a fray to be fought, between sir Hugh the Welsh priest, and Caius the French doctor.

Ford. Good mine host o' the Garter, a word with you.

Host. What say'st thou, bully-rook?

[*they go aside.*]

Shal. Will you [*to Page*] go with us to behold it? My merry host hath had the measuring of their weapons; and, I think, he hath appointed them contrary places: for, believe me, I hear, the parson is no jester. Hark, I will tell you what our sport shall be.

Host. Hast thou no suit against my knight, my guest-cavalier?

Ford. None, I protest: but I'll give you a pottle of burnt sack to give me recourse to him, and tell him, my name is Brook; only for a jest.

Host. My hand, bully: thou shalt have egress and regress; said I well? and thy name shall be Brook. It is a merry knight.—Will you go, Anheires?¹

Shal. Have with you, mine host.

Page. I have heard, the Frenchman hath good skill in his rapier.

¹ "Probably, Will you go, and hear us? —Malone.

Shal. Tut, sir, I could have told you more. In these times you stand on distance, your passes, stoocadoes, and I know not what: 'tis the heart, master Page; 'tis here, 'tis here. I have seen the time, with my long sword, I would have made you four tall fellows skip like rats.

Host. Here, boys, here, here! shall we wag?

Page. Have with you:—I had rather hear them scold than fight. [*Exeunt Host, Shallow, and Page.*]

Ford. Though Page be a secure fool, and stands so firmly on his wife's frailty, yet I cannot put off my opinion so easily: she was in his company at Page's house; and, what they made¹ there, I know not. Well, I will look farther into 't; and I have a disguise to sound Falstaff: if I find her honest, I lose not my labor; if she be otherwise, 'tis labor well bestowed.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

A room in the Garter Inn.

Enter FALSTAFF and PISTOL.

Fal. I will not lend thee a penny.

Pis. Why, then the world's mine oyster,
Which I with sword will open.—
I will retort the sum in equipage.²

Fal. Not a penny. I have been content, sir, you should lay my countenance to pawn: I have grated

¹ Did.

² I will pay you again in stolen goods.

upon¹ my good friends for three reprieves for you and your coach-fellow² Nym; or else you had looked through the grate, like a geminy³ of baboons. I am damned in hell, for swearing to gentlemen my friends, you were good soldiers, and tall⁴ fellows: and when mistress Bridget lost the handle of her fan, I took't upon mine honor, thou hadst it not.

Pis. Didst thou not share? hadst thou not fifteen pence?

Fal. Reason, you rogue, reason. Think'st thou I'll endanger my soul gratis? At a word, hang no more about me; I am no gibbet for you:—go.—A short knife and a throng;⁵—to your manor of Pickthatch,⁶ go.—You'll not bear a letter for me, you rogue!—you stand upon your honor!—Why, thou unconfinable baseness, it is as much as I can do, to keep the terms of my honor precise. I, I, I myself sometimes, leaving the fear of heaven on the left hand, and hiding mine honor in my necessity, am fain to shuffle, to hedge, and to lurch; and yet you, rogue, will ensconce⁷ your rags, your cat-a-mountain looks, your red-lattice phrases,⁸ and your bold-beating oaths, under the shelter of your honor! You will not do it, you?

¹ Importuned.

² He who draws along with you; i. e. is joined with you in all your knavery. ³ A pair. ⁴ Bold.

⁵ Go, cut purses in a crowd.

⁶ A place in Turnbull-street noted for pickpockets.

⁷ Cover. ⁸ Your ale-house conversation.

Pis. I do relent; what wouldest thou more of man?

Enter ROBIN.

Rob. Sir, here's a woman would speak with you.

Fal. Let her approach.

Enter MRS. QUICKLY.

Mrs. Quick. Give your worship good-morrow.

Fal. Good-morrow, good wife.

Mrs. Quick. Not so, an't please your worship.

Fal. Good maid, then.

Mrs. Quick. I'll be sworn; as my mother was, the first hour I was born.

Fal. I do believe the swearer. What with me?

Mrs. Quick. Shall I vouchsafe your worship a word or two?

Fal. Two thousand, fair woman; and I'll vouchsafe thee the hearing.

Mrs. Quick. There is one mistress Ford, sir;—I pray, come a little nearer this ways:—I myself dwell with master doctor Caius.

Fal. Well, on. Mistress Ford, you say,—

Mrs. Quick. Your worship says very true: I pray your worship, come a little nearer this ways.

Fal. I warrant thee, nobody hears;—mine own people, mine own people.

Mrs. Quick. Are they so? Heaven bless them, and make them his servants!

Fal. Well: mistress Ford;—what of her?

Mrs. Quick. Why, sir, she's a good creature. Lord, lord! your worship's a wanton, Well, Heaven forgive you, and all of us, I pray!

Fal. Mistress Ford;—come, mistress Ford,—

Mrs. Quick. Marry, this is the short and the long of it; you have brought her into such a canaries,¹ as 'tis wonderful. The best courtier of them all, when the court lay at Windsor, could never have brought her to such a canary. Yet there has been knights, and lords, and gentlemen, with their coaches; I warrant you, coach after coach, letter after letter, gift after gift; smelling so sweetly, (all musk) and so rushling, I warrant you, in silk and gold; and in such alligant² terms; and in such wine and sugar of the best, and the fairest, that would have won any woman's heart; and, I warrant you, they could never get an eye-wink of her.—I had myself twenty angels given me this morning: but I defy all angels, (in any such sort, as they say) but in the way of honesty:—and, I warrant you, they could never get her so much as sip on a cup with the proudest of them all: and yet there has been earls, nay, which is more, pensioners;³ but, I warrant you, all is one with her.

Fal. But what says she to me? Be brief, my good she Mercury.

Mrs. Quick. Marry, she hath received your letter;

¹ A mistake of Mrs. Quickly for quandary.

² Elegant. ³ Gentlemen pensioners.

for the which she thanks you a thousand times :
and she gives you to notify, that her husband will
be absence from his house between ten and eleven.

Fal. Ten and eleven ?

Mrs. Quick. Ay, forsooth ; and then you may
come and see the picture, she says, that you wot of ;
—master Ford, her husband, will be from home.
Alas ! the sweet woman leads an ill life with him ;
he 's a very jealousy man ; she leads a very fram-
pold¹ life with him, good heart !

Fal. Ten and eleven. Woman, commend me to
her ; I will not fail her.

Mrs. Quick. Why, you say well. But I have
another messenger to your worship. Mistress Page
hath her hearty commendations to you too ;—and
let me tell you in your ear, she 's as fartuous a civil
modest wife, and one (I tell you) that will not miss
you morning nor evening prayer, as any is in
Windsor, whoe'er be the other : and she bade me
tell your worship, that her husband is seldom from
home ; but, she hopes, there will come a time. I
never knew a woman so dote upon a man ; surely,
I think, you have charms, la ; yes, in truth.

Fal. Not I, I assure thee ; setting the attraction
of my good parts aside, I have no other charms.

Mrs. Quick. Blessing on your heart for 't !

Fal. But, I pray thee, tell me this : has Ford's
wife, and Page's wife, acquainted each other how
they love me ?

¹ Fretful, cross.

Mrs. Quick. That were a jest, indeed!—they have not so little grace, I hope:—that were a trick, indeed! But mistress Page would desire you to send her your little page, of all loves;¹ her husband has a marvellous infection to the little page: and, truly, master Page is an honest man. Never a wife in Windsor leads a better life than she does; do what she will, say what she will, take all, pay all, go to bed when she list, rise when she list, all is as she will; and, truly, she deserves it; for if there be a kind woman in Windsor, she is one. You must send her your page; no remedy.

Fal. Why, I will.

Mrs. Quick. Nay, but do so then: and, look you, he may come and go between you both; and, in any case, have a nay-word,² that you may know one another's mind, and the boy never need to understand any thing; for 'tis not good that children should know any wickedness: old folks, you know, have discretion, as they say, and know the world.

Fal. Fare thee well: commend me to them both: there's my purse; I am yet thy debtor.—Boy, go along with this woman.—This news distracts me!

[*Exeunt Mrs. Quickly and Robin.*]

Pis. This punk is one of Cupid's carriers:—Clap on more sails; pursue, up with your fights;³

¹ By all means.

² Watch-word.

³ Fights, i. e. clothes hung round the ship to conceal the men from the enemy.

Give fire; she is my prize, or ocean whelm them all!

{*Exit Pistol.*}

Fal. Say 'st thou so, old Jack? go thy ways; I 'll make more of thy old body than I have done. Will they yet look after thee? Wilt thou, after the expense of so much money, be now a gainer? Good body, I thank thee. Let them say, 'tis grossly done; so it be fairly done, no matter.

Enter BARDOLPH.

Bar. Sir John, there 's one master Brook below would fain speak with you, and be acquainted with you; and hath sent your worship a morning's draught of sack.

Fal. Brook, is his name?

Bar. Ay, sir.

Fal. Call him in. [*Exit Bardolph.*] Such Brooks are welcome to me, that o'erflow such liquor. Ah! ha! mistress Ford and mistress Page, have I encompassed you? go to; *via!*¹

Re-enter BARDOLPH, with FORD disguised.

Ford. Bless you, sir.

Fal. And you, sir. Would you speak with me?

Ford. I make bold, to press with so little preparation upon you.

Fal. You 're welcome. What 's your will? Give us leave, drawer. [*Exit Bardolph.*

¹ A cant phrase of exultation.

Ford. Sir, I am a gentleman that have spent much; my name is Brook.

Fal. Good master Brook, I desire more acquaintance of you.

Ford. Good sir John, I sue for yours: not to charge you;¹ for I must let you understand, I think myself in better plight for a lender than you are: the which hath something emboldened me to this unseasoned intrusion; for they say, if money go before, all ways do lie open.

Fal. Money is a good soldier, sir, and will on.

Ford. Troth, and I have a bag of money here troubles me: if you will help to bear it, sir John, take all, or half, for easing me of the carriage.

Fal. Sir, I know not how I may deserve to be your porter.

Ford. I will tell you, sir, if you will give me the hearing.

Fal. Speak, good master Brook; I shall be glad to be your servant.

Ford. Sir, I hear you are a scholar,—I will be brief with you;—and you have been a man long known to me, though I had never so good means, as desire, to make myself acquainted with you. I shall discover a thing to you, wherein I must very much lay open mine own imperfection: but, good sir John, as you have one eye upon my follies, as you hear them unfolded, turn another into the

¹ To put you to expense.

register of your own ; that I may pass with a re-proof the easier, sith¹ you yourself know how easy it is to be such an offender.

Fal. Very well, sir ; proceed.

Ford. There is a gentlewoman in this town, her husband's name is Ford.

Fal. Well, sir.

Ford. I have long loved her, and, I protest to you, bestowed much on her ; followed her with a doting observance ; engrossed² opportunities to meet her ; fee'd every slight occasion, that could but niggardly give me sight of her ; not only bought many presents to give her, but have given largely to many, to know what she would have given : briefly, I have pursued her, as love hath pursued me ; which hath been, on the wing of all occasions. But whatsoever I have merited, either in my mind or in my means, meed,³ I am sure, I have received none ; unless experience be a jewel : that I have purchased at an infinite rate ; and that hath taught me to say this :

Love like a shadow flies, when substance love
pursues ;

Pursuing that that flies, and flying what pursues.

Fal. Have you received no promise of satisfaction at her hands ?

Ford. Never.

Fal. Have you importuned her to such a purpose ?

Ford. Never.

¹ Since.

² Seized.

³ Reward.

Fal. Of what quality was your love then ?

Ford. Like a fair house, built upon another man's ground ; so that I have lost my edifice, by mistaking the place where I erected it.

Fal. To what purpose have you unfolded this to me ?

Ford. When I have told you that, I have told you all. Some say, that, though she appear honest to me, yet, in other places, she enlargeth her mirth so far, that there is shrewd construction made of her. Now, sir John, here is the heart of my purpose : You are a gentleman of excellent breeding, admirable discourse, of great admittance,¹ authentic in your place and person, generally allowed² for your many war-like, court-like, and learned preparations.³

Fal. O, sir !

Ford. Believe it, for you know it.—There is money ; spend it, spend it ; spend more ; spend all I have ; only give me so much of your time in exchange of it, as to lay an amiable siege⁴ to the honesty of this Ford's wife : use your art of wooing ; win her to consent to you ; if any man may, you may as soon as any.

Fal. Would it apply well to the vehemency of your affection, that I should win what you would enjoy ? Methinks, you prescribe to yourself very preposterously.

¹ Admitted into the best society.

² Approved.

³ Accomplishments.

⁴ A siege of love.

Ford. O, understand my drift ! she dwells so securely on the excellency of her honor, that the folly of my soul dares not present itself ; she is too bright to be looked against. Now, could I come to her with any detection in my hand, my desires had instance¹ and argument to commend themselves ; I could drive her then from the ward² of her purity, her reputation, her marriage vow, and a thousand other her defences, which now are too strongly embattled against me. What say you to 't, sir John ?

Fal. Master Brook, I will first make bold with your money ; next, give me your hand ; and last, as I am a gentleman, you shall, if you will, enjoy Ford's wife.

Ford. O good sir !

Fal. Master Brook, I say you shall.

Ford. Want no money, sir John, you shall want none.

Fal. Want no mistress Ford, master Brook, you shall want none. I shall be with her (I may tell you) by her own appointment ; even as you came in to me, her assistant, or go-between, parted from me : I say, I shall be with her between ten and eleven ; for at that time the jealous rascally knave, her husband, will be forth. Come you to me at night ; you shall know how I speed.

Ford. I am blest in your acquaintance. Do you know Ford, sir ?

¹ Example.

² Defence.

Fal. Hang him, poor cuckoldly knave ! I know him not :—yet I wrong him, to call him poor : they say, the jealous wittolly¹ knave hath masses of money ; for the which his wife seems to me well-favored. I will use her as the key of the cuckoldry rogue's coffer ; and there 's my harvest-home.

Ford. I would you knew Ford, sir, that you might avoid him, if you saw him.

Fal. Hang him, mechanical salt-butter rogue ! I will stare him out of his wits ; I will awe him with my cudgel : it shall hang like a meteor o'er the cuckold's horns : master Brook, thou shalt know, I will predominate o'er the peasant, and thou shalt lie with his wife.—Come to me soon at night.—Ford 's a knave, and I will aggravate his style ;² thou, master Brook, shalt know him for a knave and cuckold :—come to me soon at night. [Exit.]

Ford. What a damned Epicurean rascal is this !—My heart is ready to crack with impatience.—Who says, this is improvident jealousy ? My wife hath sent to him, the hour is fixed, the match is made. Would any man have thought this ?—See the hell of having a false woman ! my bed shall be abused, my coffers ransacked, my reputation gnawn at ; and I shall not only receive this villainous wrong, but stand under the adoption of abominable terms, and by him that does me this wrong. Terms ! names !—Amaimon

¹ Wittol is a tame cuckold.

² I will add more titles to those he now enjoys.

sounds well; Lucifer, well; Barbason, well; yet they are devils' additions, the names of fiends: but cuckold! wittol-cuckold: the devil himself hath not such a name. Page is an ass, a secure ass; he will trust his wife, he will not be jealous. I will rather trust a Fleming with my butter, parson Hugh the Welshman with my cheese, an Irishman with my aqua-vitæ¹ bottle, or a thief to walk my ambling gelding, than my wife with herself: then she plots, then she ruminates, then she devises: and what they think in their hearts they may effect, they will break their hearts but they will effect. Heaven be praised for my jealousy!—Eleven o'clock the hour!—I will prevent this, detect my wife, be revenged on Falstaff, and laugh at Page. I will about it; better three hours too soon, than a minute too late. Fie, fie, fie! cuckold! cuckold! cuckold! [Exit.

SCENE III.

*Windsor Park.**Enter CAIUS and RUGBY.**Caius.* Jack Rugby!*Rug.* Sir.*Caius.* Vat is de clock, Jack?*Rug.* 'Tis past the hour, sir, that sir Hugh promised to meet.

¹ Usquebaugh.

Caius. By gar, he has save his soul, dat he is no come ; he has pray his Pible vell, dat he is no come : by gar, Jack Rugby, he is dead already, if he be come.

Rug. He is wise, sir ; he knew, your worship would kill him, if he came.

Caius. By gar, de herring is no dead, so as I vill kill him. Take your rapier, Jack : I vill tell you how I vill kill him.

Rug. Alas, sir, I cannot fence.

Caius. Villany, take your rapier.

Rug. Forbear ; here's company.

Enter HOST, SHALLOW, SLENDER, and PAGE.

Host. Bless thee, bully doctor.

Shal. Save you, master doctor Caius.

Page. Now, good master doctor !

Slen. Give you good-morrow, sir.

Caius. Vat be all you, one, two, tree, four, come for ?

Host. To see thee fight, to see thee foin,¹ to see thee traverse, to see thee here, to see thee there ; to see thee pass thy punto, thy stock, thy reverse, thy distance, thy montant.² Is he dead, my Ethiopian ? is he dead, my Francisco ? ha, bully ! What says my AEsculapius ? my Galen ? my heart of elder ? ha ! is he dead, bully Stale ? is he dead ?

¹ Thrust or lunge.

² Terms in fencing.

Caius. By gar, he is de coward Jack priest of the world ; he is not show his face.

Host. Thou art a Castilian¹ king, Urinal ! Hector of Greece, my boy !

Caius. I pray you, bear witness that me have stay six or seven, two, tree hours for him, and he is no come.

Shal. He is the wiser man, master doctor : he is a curer of souls, and you a curer of bodies ; if you should fight, you go against the hair² of your professions : is it not true, master Page ?

Page. Master Shallow, you have yourself been a great fighter, though now a man of peace.

Shal. Bodykins, master Page, though I now be old, and of the peace, if I see a sword out, my finger itches to make one : though we are justices, and doctors, and churchmen, master Page, we have some salt of our youth in us ; we are the sons of women, master Page.

Page. 'Tis true, master Shallow.

Shal. It will be found so, master Page. Master doctor Caius, I am come to fetch you home. I am sworn of the peace : you have showed yourself a wise physician, and sir Hugh hath shown himself a wise and patient churchman : you must go with me, master doctor.

¹ Castilian is sometimes used for Spaniard in general.

² As we now say, 'against the grain.'

Host. Pardon, guest justice :—A word, monsieur Muck-water.¹

Caius. Muck-vater ! vat is dat ?

Host. Muck-water, in our English tongue, is valor, bully.

Caius. By gar, then I have as much muck-vater as de Englishman.—Scurvy jack-dog-priest ! by gar, me vill cut his ears.

Host. He will clapper-claw thee tightly, bully.

Caius. Clapper-de-claw ! vat is dat ?

Host. That is, he will make thee amends.

Caius. By gar, me do look, he shall clapper-de-claw me : for, by gar, me vill have it.

Host. And I will provoke him to 't, or let him wag.

Caius. Me tank you for dat.

Host. And moreover, bully,—But first, master guest, and master Page, and eke cavalero Slender, go you through the town to Frogmore.

[*aside to them.*

Page. Sir Hugh is there, is he ?

Host. He is there : see what humor he is in ; and I will bring the doctor about by the fields : will it do well ?

Shal. We will do it.

Page, Shal. and Slen. Adieu, good master doctor.

[*Exeunt Page, Shallow, and Slender.*

¹ The drain of a dunhill is called muck-water.

Caius. By gar, me vill kill de priest; for he speak
for a jack-an-ape to Anne Page.

Host. Let him die: but, first, sheathe thy impa-
tience; throw cold water on thy choler; go about
the fields with me through Frogmore; I will bring
thee where mistress Anne Page is, at a farm-house a
feasting; and thou shall woo her. Cried game,¹ said
I well?

Caius. By gar, me tank you for dat: by gar, I
love you; and I shall procure-a you de good guest,
de earl, de knight, de lords, de gentlemen, my pa-
tients.

Host. For the which, I will be thy adversary to-
wards Anne Page: said I well?

Caius. By gar, 'tis good; vell said.

Host. Let us wag then.

Caius. Come at my heels, Jack Rugby. [*Exeunt.*

A C T I I I.

SCENE I.

A field near Frogmore.

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS and SIMPLE.

Evans. I pray you now, good master Slender's
serving-man, and friend Simple by your name, which
way have you looked for master Caius, that calls
himself Doctor of Physic?

¹ True game; a cant phrase.

Sim. Marry, sir, the city-ward, the park-ward, every way; old Windsor way, and every way but the town way.

Evans. I most fehemently desire you, you will also look that way.

Sim. I will, sir.

Evans. Pless my soul! how full of cholers I am, and trembling of mind!—I shall be glad, if he have deceived me:—how melancholies I am!—I will knog his urinals about his knave's costard,¹ when I have good opportunities for the 'orce:—pless my soul! [sings.]

To shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals;²
There will we make our peds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies.³

To shallow——

Mercy on me! I have a great dispositions to cry.

Melodious birds sing madrigals;—
When as I sat in Pabylon,⁴—
And a thousand vgram posies.
To shallow——

Sim. Yonder he is coming, this way, sir Hugh.

Evans. He's welcome:—

To shallow rivers, to whose falls——

Heaven prosper the right!—What weapons is he?

¹ Head. ² Pastoral songs.

³ This is part of a beautiful little poem of our author.

⁴ This is the first line of the 139th psalm.

Sim. No weapons, sir. There comes my master, master Shallow, and another gentleman from Frogmore, over the stile, this way.

Evans. Pray you, give me my gown; or else keep it in your arms.

Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER.

Shal. How now, master parson? Good-morrow, good sir Hugh. Keep a gamester from the dice, and a good student from his book, and it is wonderful.

Slen. Ah, sweet Anne Page!

Page. Save you, good sir Hugh!

Evans. Bless you from his mercy sake, all of you!

Shal. What! the sword and the word? do you study them both, master parson?

Page. And youthful still, in your doublet and hose, this raw rheumatic day?

Evans. There is reasons and causes for it.

Page. We are come to you to do a good office, master parson.

Evans. Fery well: what is it?

Page. Yonder is a most reverend gentleman, who belike, having received wrong by some person, is at most odds with his own gravity and patience, that ever you saw.

Shal. I have lived fourscore years, and upward; I never heard a man of his place, gravity, and learning, so wide of¹ his own respect.

¹ Forgetful of.

Evans. What is he ?

Page. I think you know him ; master doctor Caius, the renowned French physician.

Evans. Got's will, and his passion of my heart ! I had as lief you would tell me of a mess of porridge.

Page. Why ?

Evans. He has no more knowlege in Hibocrates and Galen,—and he is a knave besides ; a cowardly knave, as you would desires to be acquainted withal.

Page. I warrant you, he 's the man should fight with him.

Slen. O, sweet Anne Page !

Shal. It appears so, by his weapons.—Keep them asunder ;—here comes doctor Caius.

Enter HOST, CAIUS, and RUGBY.

Page. Nay, good master parson, keep in your weapon.

Shal. So do you, good master doctor.

Host. Disarm them, and let them question ; let them keep their limbs whole, and hack our English.

Caius. I pray you, let-a me speak a word vit your ear. Verefore vill you not meet-a me ?

Evans. Pray you, use your patience. In good time.

Caius. By gar, you are de coward, de Jack dog, John ape.

Evans. Pray you, let us not be laughing-stogs to other men's humors ; I desire you in friendship, and I will one way or other make you amends :—I will

knog your urinals about your knave's cogscomb,¹ for missing your meetings and appointments.

Caius. Diable!—Jack Rugby,—mine host *de Jar-terre*, have I not stay for him, to kill him? have I not, at de place I did appoint?

Evans. As I am a christians soul, now, look you, this is the place appointed; I'll be judgment by mine host of the Garter.

Host. Peace, I say, Guallia and Gaul, French and Welsh; soul-curer and body-curer.

Caius. Ay, dat is very good! excellent!

Host. Peace, I say; hear mine host of the Garter. Am I politic? am I subtle? am I a Machiavel? Shall I lose my doctor? no; he gives me the potions and the motions. Shall I lose my parson? my priest? my sir Hugh? no; he gives me the proverbs and the no-verbs.—Give me thy hand, terrestrial; so.—Give me thy hand, celestial; so.—Boys of art, I have deceived you both; I have directed you to wrong places: your hearts are mighty, your skins are whole, and let burnt sack be the issue.—Come, lay their swords to pawn.—Follow me, lad of peace; follow, follow, follow.

Shal. Trust me, a mad host.—Follow, gentlemen, follow.

Slen. O, sweet Anne Page!

[*Exeunt Shallow, Slender, Page, and Host.*

¹ In allusion to the comb, resembling that of a cock, which licensed fools wore in their caps.

Caius. Ha! do I perceive dat? have you make-a de sot¹ of us? ha, ha!

Evans. This is well; he has made us his vlotting-stog.—I desire you, that we may be friends; and let us knog our prains together, to be revenge on this same scall,² scury, cogging³ companion, the host of the Garter.

Caius. By gar, vit all my heart: he promise to bring me vere is Anne Page: by gar, he deceive me too.

Evans. Well, I will smite his noddles.—Pray you, follow. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

The street in Windsor.

Enter MRS. PAGE and ROBIN.

Mrs. Page. Nay, keep your way, little gallant; you were wont to be a follower, but now you are a leader. Whether had you rather, lead mine eyes, or eye your master's heels?

Rob. I had rather, forsooth, go before you like a man, than follow him like a dwarf.

Mrs. Page. O, you are a flattering boy: now, I see, you 'll be a courtier.

Enter FORD.

Ford. Well met, mistress Page. Whither go you?

¹ Fool.

² Scabby.

³ Cheating.

Mrs. Page. Truly, sir, to see your wife. Is she at home?

Ford. Ay; and as idle as she may hang together, for want of company. I think, if your husbands were dead, you two would marry.

Mrs. Page. Be sure of that,—two other husbands.

Ford. Where had you this pretty weather-cock?

Mrs. Page. I cannot tell what the dickens his name is my husband had him of. What do you call your knight's name, sirrah?

Rob. Sir John Falstaff.

Ford. Sir John Falstaff!

Mrs. Page. He, he; I can never hit on 's name.—There is such a league between my good man and he!—Is your wife at home, indeed?

Ford. Indeed, she is.

Mrs. Page. By your leave, sir;—I am sick, till I see her. [Exit *Mrs. Page and Robin.*]

Ford. Has Page any brains? hath he any eyes? hath he any thinking? Sure, they sleep; he hath no use of them. Why, this boy will carry a letter twenty miles, as easy as a cannon will shoot point-blank twelve score. He pieces-out his wife's inclination; he gives her folly motion and advantage: and now she's going to my wife, and Falstaff's boy with her. A man may hear this shower sing in the wind!—and Falstaff's boy with her!—Good plots!—they are laid; and our revolted wives share damnation together. Well; I will take him, then torture my wife, pluck the borrowed veil of modesty

from the so seeming¹ mistress Page, divulge Page himself for a secure and wilful Actæon ; and to these violent proceedings all my neighbors shall cry aim.² [clock strikes.] The clock gives me my cue, and my assurance bids me search ; there I shall find Falstaff : I shall be rather praised for this, than mocked ; for it is as positive as the earth is firm, that Falstaff is there : I will go.

Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, SLENDER, HOST, SIR HUGH EVANS, CAIUS, and RUGBY.

Shal. Page, &c. Well met, master Ford.

Ford. Trust me, a good knot : I have good cheer at home ; and, I pray you, all go with me.

Shal. I must excuse myself, master Ford.

Slen. And so must I, sir ; we have appointed to dine with mistress Anne, and I would not break with her for more money than I 'll speak of.

Shal. We have lingered about a match between Anne Page and my cousin Slender, and this day we shall have our answer.

Slen. I hope, I have your good will, father Page.

Page. You have, master Slender ; I stand wholly for you :—but my wife, master doctor, is for you altogether.

Caius. Ay, by gar ; and de maid is love-a me ; my nursh-a Quickly tell me so mush.

Host. What say you to young master Fenton ?

¹ Specious.

² Shall give encouragement.

he capers, he dances, he has eyes of youth, he writes verses, he speaks holyday,¹ he smells April and May : he will carry 't, he will carry 't; 'tis in his buttons ;² he will carry 't.

Page. Not by my consent, I promise you. The gentleman is of no having :³ he kept company with the wild prince and Poins ; he is of too high a region ; he knows too much. No, he shall not knit a knot in his fortunes with the finger of my substance : if he take her, let him take her simply ; the wealth I have waits on my consent, and my consent goes not that way.

Ford. I beseech you, heartily, some of you go home with me to dinner : besides your cheer, you shall have sport ; I will show you a monster.—Master doctor, you shall go ; so shall you, master Page ;—and you, Sir Hugh.

Shal. Well, fare you well : we shall have the freer wooing at master Page's.

[*Exeunt Shallow and Slender.*]

Caius. Go home, John Rugby ; I come anon.

[*Exit Rugby.*]

Host. Farewell, my hearts : I will to my honest knight Falstaff, and drink canary with him.

[*Exit Host.*]

¹ In a style superior to the vulgar.

² Alluding to an ancient custom among rustic swains, of wearing the flowers called bachelors' buttons in their pockets, and judging of their success in courtship, by their growing or not growing there.

³ Of no estate or fortune.

Ford. [aside.] I think, I shall drink in pipe-wine first with him ; I 'll make him dance.¹ Will you go, gentle ?

All. Have with you, to see this monster.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. .

A room in Ford's house.

Enter MRS. FORD and MRS. PAGE.

Mrs. Ford. What, John ! what, Robert !

Mrs. Page. Quickly, quickly ! Is the buck-basket²—

Mrs. Ford. I warrant.—What, Robin, I say.

Enter Servants with a basket.

Mrs. Page. Come, come, come.

Mrs. Ford. Here, set it down.

Mrs. Page. Give your men the charge ; we must be brief.

Mrs. Ford. Marry, as I told you before, John, and Robert, be ready here hard by in the brewhouse ; and when I suddenly call you, come forth, and (without any pause or staggering) take this basket on your shoulders : that done, trudge with it in all haste, and carry it among the whitsters³ in Datchet

¹ I will give him pipe-wine, which shall make him dance. Canary is the name of a dance as well as of a wine.

² Basket in which clothes are carried to the wash.

³ Bleachers of linen.

mead, and there empty it in the muddy ditch, close by the Thames side.

Mrs. Page. You will do it?

Mrs. Ford. I have told them over and over; they lack no direction. Be gone, and come when you are called. [Exit Servants.

Mrs. Page. Here comes little Robin.

Enter ROBIN.

Mrs. Ford. How now, my eyas-musket?¹ what news with you?

Rob. My master sir John is come in at your back-door, mistress Ford, and requests your company.

Mrs. Page. You little Jack-a-lent,² have you been true to us?

Rob. Ay, I'll be sworn. My master knows not of your being here; and hath threatened to put me into everlasting liberty, if I tell you of it; for, he swears, he'll turn me away.

Mrs. Page. Thou'rt a good boy; this secresy of thine shall be a tailor to thee, and shall make thee a new doublet and hose.—I'll go hide me.

Mrs. Ford. Do so.—Go, tell thy master, I am alone. Mistress Page, remember you your cue.

[Exit Robin.

Mrs. Page. I warrant thee: if I do not act it, hiss me. [Exit Mrs. Page.

¹ Eyas-musket is a young, unfledged sparrow-hawk.

² A puppet thrown out in Lent, like shrove cocks.

Mrs. Ford. Go to then; we'll use this unwholesome humidity, this gross watery pumpon;—we'll teach him to know turtles from jays.

Enter FALSTAFF.

Fal. Have I caught thee, my heavenly jewel? Why, now let me die, for I have lived long enough; this is the period of my ambition. O this blessed hour!

Mrs. Ford. O sweet sir John!

Fal. Mistress Ford, I cannot cog,¹ I cannot prate, mistress Ford. Now shall I sin in my wish: I would thy husband were dead; I'll speak it before the best lord, I would make thee my lady.

Mrs. Ford. I your lady, sir John! alas, I should be a pitiful lady.

Fal. Let the court of France show me such another. I see how thine eye would emulate the diamond: thou hast the right arched bent of the brow, that becomes the ship-tire, the tire-valiant, or any tire of Venetian admittance.²

Mrs. Ford. A plain kerchief, sir John: my brows become nothing else; nor that well neither.

Fal. By the Lord, thou art a traitor³ to say so: thou wouldst make an absolute courtier; and the firm fixture of thy foot would give an excellent motion to thy gait, in a semicircled farthingale.⁴

¹ Flatter.

² Fashion.

³ i. e. to thy own merit.

⁴ Hoop.

I see what thou wert, if fortune thy foe were not ;
nature is thy friend. Come, thou canst not hide it.

Mrs. Ford. Believe me, there's no such thing
in me.

Fal. What made me love thee ? let that persuade
thee, there's something extraordinary in thee.
Come, I cannot cog, and say, thou art this and that,
like a many of these lisping hawthorn-buds, that
come like women in men's apparel, and smell like
Bucklersbury in simple-time ;¹ I cannot : but I
love thee ; none but thee ; and thou deservest it.

Mrs. Ford. Do not betray me, sir ; I fear, you
love mistress Page.

Fal. Thou mightst as well say, I love to walk by
the Counter-gate ; which is as hateful to me as the
reek² of a lime-kiln.

Mrs. Ford. Well, Heaven knows, how I love
you ; and you shall one day find it.

Fal. Keep in that mind ; I'll deserve it.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, I must tell you, so you do ; or
else I could not be in that mind.

Rob. [within.] Mistress Ford, mistress Ford !
here's mistress Page at the door, sweating, and
blowing, and looking wildly, and would needs speak
with you presently.

Fal. She shall not see me ; I will ensconce³ me
behind the arras.⁴

¹ Bucklersbury, in our author's time, was chiefly inhabited
by druggists, who sold all kinds of herbs, green as well as dry.

² Vapor. ³ Hide. ⁴ Tapestry.

Mrs. Ford. Pray you, do so; she's a very tattling woman.— [Falstaff hides himself.]

Enter MRS. PAGE and ROBIN.

What's the matter? how now?

Mrs. Page. O mistress Ford, what have you done? You're shamed, you are overthrown, you are undone for ever.

Mrs. Ford. What's the matter, good mistress Page?

Mrs. Page. O well-a-day, mistress Ford! having an honest man to your husband, to give him such cause of suspicion!

Mrs. Ford. What cause of suspicion?

Mrs. Page. What cause of suspicion?—Out upon you! how am I mistook in you?

Mrs. Ford. Why, alas! what's the matter?

Mrs. Page. Your husband's coming hither, woman, with all the officers in Windsor, to search for a gentleman, that, he says, is here now in the house, by your consent, to take an ill advantage of his absence. You are undone.

Mrs. Ford. Speak louder.—[aside.]—'Tis not so, I hope.

Mrs. Page. Pray Heaven it be not so, that you have such a man here; but 'tis most certain your husband's coming with half Windsor at his heels, to search for such a one. I come before to tell you. If you know yourself clear, why I am glad of it; but if you have a friend here, convey, convey

him out. Be not amazed; call all your senses to you; defend your reputation, or bid farewell to your good life for ever.

Mrs. Ford. What shall I do?—There is a gentleman, my dear friend; and I fear not mine own shame so much as his peril: I had rather than a thousand pound, he were out of the house.

Mrs. Page. For shame! never stand ‘you had rather,’ and ‘you had rather;’ your husband’s here at hand; bethink you of some conveyance: in the house you cannot hide him. O, how have you deceived me!—Look, here is a basket; if he be of any reasonable stature, he may creep in here; and throw foul linen upon him, as if it were going to bucking.¹ Or, it is whiting-time;² send him by your two men to Datchet mead.

Mrs. Ford. He’s too big to go in there. What shall I do?

Re-enter FALSTAFF.

Fal. Let me see ‘t, let me see ‘t! O, let me see ‘t! I ’ll in, I ’ll in;—follow your friend’s counsel;—I ’ll in.

Mrs. Page. What! sir John Falstaff! Are these your letters, knight?

Fal. I love thee, and none but thee; help me away: let me creep in here; I ’ll never—

[*he goes into the basket; they cover him with foul linen.*

¹ To the wash.

² Bleaching-time.

Mrs. Page. Help to cover your master, boy. Call your men, mistress Ford.—You dissembling knight!

Mrs. Ford. What, John, Robert, John! [Exit Robin. Re-enter Servants.] Go, take up these clothes here, quickly. Where's the cowl-staff?¹ look, how you drumble:² carry them to the laundress in Datchet mead; quickly, come.

Enter FORD, PAGE, CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS.

Ford. Pray you, come near: if I suspect without cause, why then make sport at me, then let me be your jest; I deserve it.—How now? whither bear you this?

Ser. To the laundress, forsooth.

Mrs. Ford. Why, what have you to do whither they bear it? You were best meddle with buck-washing.

Ford. Buck? I would I could wash myself of the buck! Buck, buck, buck? Ay, buck; I warrant you, buck; and of the season too, it shall appear. [Exeunt Servants with the basket.] Gentlemen, I have dreamed to-night; I'll tell you my dream. Here, here, here be my keys: ascend my chambers, search, seek, find out: I'll warrant, we'll unkennel the fox.—Let me stop this way first:—so, now uncape.³

¹ A staff used for carrying a large tub or basket, with two handles. ² How stupid and confused you are!

³ Unbag the fox.

Page. Good master Ford, be contented: you wrong yourself too much.

Ford. True, master Page.—Up, gentlemen; you shall see sport anon: follow me, gentlemen. [*Exit.*]

Evans. This is fery fantastical humors, and jealousies.

Caius. By gar, 'tis no de fashion of France: it is not jealous in France.

Page. Nay, follow him, gentlemen; see the issue of his search. [*Exeunt Evans, Page, and Caius.*]

Mrs. Page. Is there not a double excellency in this?

Mrs. Ford. I know not which pleases me better, that my husband is deceived, or sir John.

Mrs. Page. What a taking was he in, when your husband asked who¹ was in the basket!

Mrs. Ford. I am half afraid he will have need of washing; so throwing him into the water will do him a benefit.

Mrs. Page. Hang him, dishonest rascal! I would, all of the same strain² were in the same distress.

Mrs. Ford. I think, my husband hath some special suspicion of Falstaff's being here; for I never saw him so gross in his jealousy till now.

Mrs. Page. I will lay a plot to try that: and we will yet have more tricks with Falstaff: his dissolute disease will scarce obey this medicine.

Mrs. Ford. Shall we send that foolish carrion,

¹ What.

² Disposition.

mistress Quickly, to him, and excuse his throwing into the water; and give him another hope, to betray him to another punishment?

Mrs. Page. We'll do it; let him be sent for tomorrow eight o'clock, to have amends.

Re-enter FORD, PAGE, CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS.

Ford. I cannot find him: may be the knave bragged of that he could not compass.

Mrs. Page. Heard you that?

Mrs. Ford. Ay, ay, peace.—You use me well, master Ford, do you?

Ford. Ay, I do so.

Mrs. Ford. Heaven make you better than your thoughts!

Ford. Amen.

Mrs. Page. You do yourself mighty wrong, master Ford.

Ford. Ay, ay; I must bear it.

Evans. If there be any pody in the house, and in the chambers, and in the coffers, and in the presses, Heaven forgive my sins at the day of judgment!

Caius. By gar, nor I too; dere is no bodies.

Page. Fie, fie, master Ford! are you not ashamed? What spirit, what devil suggests this imagination? I would not have your distemper in this kind, for the wealth of Windsor Castle,

Ford. 'Tis my fault, master Page: I suffer for it.

Evans. You suffer for a pad conscience: your wife is as honest a 'omans, as I will desires among five thousand, and five hundred too.

Caius. By gar, I see 'tis an honest woman.

Ford. Well;—I promised you a dinner.—Come, come, walk in the park: I pray you, pardon me; I will hereafter make known to you why I have done this.—Come, wife;—come, mistress Page; I pray you, pardon me; pray heartily, pardon me.

Page. Let's go in, gentlemen; but, trust me, we'll mock him. I do invite you to-morrow morning to my house to breakfast: after, we'll a birding together; I have a fine hawk for the bush. Shall it be so?

Ford. Any thing.

Evans. If there is one, I shall make two in the company.

Caius. If there be one or two, I shall make-a de turd.

Evans. In your teeth: for shame.

Ford. Pray you go, master Page.

Evans. I pray you now, remembrance to-morrow on the lousy knave, mine host.

Caius. Dat is good; by gar, vit all my heart.

Evans. A lousy knave; to have his gibes and his mockeries!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

A room in Page's house.

Enter FENTON and ANNE PAGE.

Fen. I see, I cannot get thy father's love;
Therefore, no more turn me to him, sweet Nan.

Anne. Alas! how then?

Fen. Why, thou must be thyself.
 He doth object, I am too great of birth ;
 And that, my state being gall'd with my expense.
 I seek to heal it only by his wealth :
 Besides these, other bars he lays before me,——
 My riots past, my wild societies ,
 And tells me, 'tis a thing impossible
 I should love thee, but as a property.

Anne. May be, he tells you true.

Fen. No, Heaven so speed me in my time to come !

Albeit, I will confess, thy father's wealth
 Was the first motive that I woo'd thee, Anne :
 Yet, wooing thee, I found thee of more value
 Than stamps in gold, or sums in sealed bags ;
 And 'tis the very riches of thyself
 That now I aim at.

Anne. Gentle master Fenton,
 Yet seek my father's love ; still seek it, sir :
 If opportunity and humblest suit
 Cannot attain it, why then,—Hark you hither.

[they converse apart.]

Enter SHALLOW, SLENDER, and MRS. QUICKLY.

Shal. Break their talk, mistress Quickly ; my kinsman shall speak for himself.

Slen. I'll make a shaft or a bolt on 't :¹ slid, 'tis but venturing.

¹ A proverb, signifying ‘I will put all to hazard.’ The shaft was a long arrow employed by skilful archers ; the bolt

Shal. Be not dismayed.

Slen. No, she shall not dismay me : I care not for that,—but that I am afeard.

Mrs. Quick. Hark ye ; master Slender would speak a word with you.

Anne. I come to him.—This is my father's choice.
O, what a world of vile ill-favor'd faults
Looks handsome in three hundred pounds a year !

[*aside.*]

Mrs. Quick. And how does good master Fenton ?
Pray you, a word with you.

Shal. She's coming ; to her, coz. O boy, thou hadst a father !

Slen. I had a father, mistress Anne ;—my uncle can tell you good jests of him.—Pray you, uncle, tell mistress Anne the jest, how my father stole two geese out of a pen, good uncle.

Shal. Mistress Anne, my cousin loves you.

Slen. Ay, that I do, as well as I love any woman in Gloucestershire.

Shal. He will maintain you like a gentlewoman.

Slen. Ay, that I will, come cut and long-tail,¹ under the degree of a squire.

a short, thick one. In this place the fool's bolt is probably alluded to.

¹ Come poor or rich to offer himself as my rival. ‘ According to the forest laws,’ says Steevens, ‘ a man who had no right to the privilege of chase, was obliged to cut his dog, by depriving him of his tail. ‘ Cut and long-tail’ therefore signify the dog of a clown and the dog of a gentleman.’

Shal. He will make you a hundred and fifty pounds jointure.

Anne. Good master Shallow, let him woo for himself.

Shal. Marry, I thank you for it; I thank you for that good comfort. She calls you, coz: I'll leave you.

Anne. Now, master Slender.

Slen. Now, good mistress Anne.

Anne. What is your will?

Slen. My will? od's heartlings, that's a pretty jest, indeed! I ne'er made my will yet, I thank Heaven: I am not such a sickly creature, I give Heaven praise.

Anne. I mean, master Slender, what would you with me?

Slen. Truly, for mine own part, I would little or nothing with you. Your father, and my uncle, have made motions:¹ if it be my luck, so; if not, happy man be his dole!² They can tell you how things go, better than I can. You may ask your father; here he comes.

Enter PAGE and MRS. PAGE.

Page. Now, master Slender!—Love him, daughter Anne.—

¹ Proposals.

² A proverbial expression, frequent in Shakespeare; signifying here ‘Happy may that man be whom you choose for a husband!’

Why, how now ! what does master Fenton here ?
You wrong me, sir, thus still to haunt my house :
I told you, sir, my daughter is disposed of.

Fen. Nay, master Page, be not impatient.

Mrs. Page. Good master Fenton, come not to my
child.

Page. She is no match for you.

Fen. Sir, will you hear me ?

Page. No, good master Fenton.
Come, master Shallow ; come, son Slender ; in :—
Knowing my mind, you wrong me, master Fenton.

[*Exeunt Page, Shallow, and Slender.*]

Mrs. Quick. Speak to mistress Page.

Fen. Good mistress Page, for¹ that I love your
daughter

In such a righteous fashion as I do,
Perforce,² against all checks, rebukes, and manners,
I must advance the colors of my love,
And not retire. Let me have your good will.

Anne. Good mother, do not marry me to yond'
fool.

Mrs. Page. I mean it not; I seek you a better
husband.

Mrs. Quick. That's my master, master doctor.

Anne. Alas, I had rather be set quick i' the earth,
And bowl'd to death with turnips.

Mrs. Page. Come, trouble not yourself. Good
master Fenton,

¹ Because.

² Of necessity.

I will not be your friend, nor enemy :
 My daughter will I question how she loves you,
 And as I find her, so am I affected ;
 'Till then, farewell, sir.—She must needs go in ;
 Her father will be angry.

[*Exeunt Mrs. Page and Anne.*

Fen. Farewell, gentle mistress ; farewell, Nan.

Mrs. Quick. This is my doing now.—Nay, said I, will you cast away your child on a fool, and¹ a physician ? Look on master Fenton :—this is my doing.

Fen. I thank thee ; and I pray thee, once² to-night

Give my sweet Nan this ring : there 's for thy pains.

[*Exit.*

Mrs. Quick. Now Heaven send thee good fortune ! A kind heart he hath : a woman would run through fire and water for such a kind heart. But yet, I would my master had mistress Anne ; or I would master Slender had her ; or, in sooth, I would master Fenton had her : I will do what I can for them all three ; for so I have promised, and I 'll be as good as my word ; but speciously³ for master Fenton. Well, I must of another errand to sir John Falstaff from my two mistresses ; what a beast am I to slack⁴ it !

[*Exit.*

¹ Or.

² Some time.

³ Especially.

⁴ Neglect.

SCENE V.

*A room in the Garter Inn.**Enter FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH.*

Fal. Bardolph, I say,—

Bar. Here, sir.

Fal. Go, fetch me a quart of sack; put a toast in 't. [Exit Bar.] Have I lived to be carried in a basket, like a barrow of butcher's offal; and to be thrown into the Thames? Well; if I be served such another trick, I'll have my brains ta'en out, and buttered, and give them to a dog for a new year's gift. The rogues slighted¹ me into the river with as little remorse as they would have drowned a bitch's blind puppies, fifteen i' the litter; and you may know by my size, that I have a kind of alacrity in sinking; if the bottom were as deep as hell, I should down. I had been drowned, but that the shore was shelvy and shallow; a death that I abhor; for the water swells a man; and what a thing should I have been, when I had been swelled! I should have been a mountain of mummy.

Re-enter BARDOLPH, with the wine.

Bar. Here's mistress Quickly, sir, to speak with you.

Fal. Come, let me pour in some sack to the

¹ Carelessly threw.

Thames water; for my belly's as cold, as if I had swallowed snow-balls for pills to cool the reins. Call her in.

Bar. Come in, woman.

Enter Mrs. Quickly.

Mrs. Quick. By your leave; I cry you mercy. Give your worship good-morrow.

Fal. Take away these chalices. Go, brew me a pottle of sack finely.

Bar. With eggs, sir?

Fal. Simple of itself; I'll no pullet-sperm in my brewage.—[*Exit Bardolph.*]—How now?

Mrs. Quick. Marry, sir, I come to your worship from mistress Ford.

Fal. Mistress Ford! I have had ford enough: I was thrown into the ford; I have my belly full of ford.

Mrs. Quick. Alas the day! good heart, that was not her fault: she does so take on with her men; they mistook their erection.

Fal. So did I mine, to build upon a foolish woman's promise.

Mrs. Quick. Well, she laments, sir, for it, that it would yearn your heart to see it. Her husband goes this morning a birding; she desires you once more to come to her between eight and nine: I must carry her word quickly: she'll make you amends, I warrant you.

Fal. Well, I will visit her: tell her so; and bid

her think, what a man is : let her consider his frailty, and then judge of my merit.

Mrs. Quick. I will tell her.

Fal. Do so. Between nine and ten, say'st thou ?

Mrs. Quick. Eight and nine, sir.

Fal. Well, be gone : I will not miss her.

Mrs. Quick. Peace be with you, sir ! [Exit.

Fal. I marvel, I hear not of master Brook ; he sent me word to stay within : I like his money well. O, here he comes.

Enter FORD.

Ford. Bless you, sir !

Fal. Now, master Brook, you come to know what hath passed between me and Ford's wife ?

Ford. That indeed, sir John, is my business.

Fal. Master Brook, I will not lie to you : I was at her house the hour she appointed me.

Ford. And how sped you, sir ?

Fal. Very ill-favouredly, master Brook.

Ford. How so, sir ? Did she change her determination ?

Fal. No, master Brook : but the peaking cornuto her husband, master Brook, dwelling in a continual 'larum of jealousy, comes me in the instant of our encounter, after we had embraced, kissed, protested, and, as it were, spoke the prologue of our comedy ; and at his heels a rabble of his companions, thither provoked and instigated by his distemper, and, forsooth, to search his house for his wife's love.

Ford. What, while you were there?

Fal. While I was there.

Ford. And did he search for you, and could not find you?

Fal. You shall hear. As good luck would have it, comes in one mistress Page; gives intelligence of Ford's approach; and, by her invention, and Ford's wife's distraction, they conveyed me into a buck-basket.

Ford. A buck-basket?

Fal. By the Lord, a buck-basket: rammed me in with foul shirts and smocks, socks, foul stockings, and greasy napkins: that, master Brook, there was the rankest compound of villainous smell, that ever offended nostril.

Ford. And how long lay you there?

Fal. Nay, you shall hear, master Brook, what I have suffered to bring this woman to evil for your good. Being thus crammed in the basket, a couple of Ford's knaves, his hinds, were called forth by their mistress, to carry me in the name of foul clothes to Datchet-lane: they took me on their shoulders; met the jealous knave their master in the door, who asked them once or twice what they had in their basket: I quaked for fear, lest the lunatic knave would have searched it; but Fate, ordaining he should be a cuckold, held his hand. Well; on went he for a search, and away went I for foul clothes. But mark the sequel, master Brook: I suffered the pangs of three several deaths: first, an intolerable fright, to be detected with a jealous

rotten bell-wether: next, to be compassed, like a good bilbo,¹ in the circumference of a peck, hilt to point, heel to head: and then, to be stopped in, like a strong distillation, with stinking clothes that fretted in their own grease: think of that,—a man of my kidney,—think of that; that am as subject to heat, as butter; a man of continual dissolution and thaw; it was a miracle, to 'scape suffocation. And in the height of this bath, when I was more than half stewed in grease, like a Dutch dish, to be thrown into the Thames, and cooled, glowing hot, in that surge, like a horse-shoe; think of that,—hissing hot,—think of that, master Brook.

Ford. In good sadness,² sir, I am sorry that for my sake you have suffered all this. My suit then is desperate; you 'll undertake her no more?

Fal. Master Brook, I will be thrown into Ætna, as I have been into Thames, ere I will leave her thus. Her husband is this morning gone a birding: I have received from her another embassy of meeting; 'twixt eight and nine is the hour, master Brook.

Ford. 'Tis past eight already, sir.

Fal. Is it? I will then address me³ to my appointment. Come to me at your convenient leisure, and you shall know how I speed; and the conclusion shall be crowned with your enjoying her. Adieu.

¹ A blade manufactured at Bilboa, in Spain, the excellence of which consisted in its flexibility and elasticity.

² Seriously.

³ Make myself ready.

You shall have her, master Brook ; master Brook,
you shall cuckold Ford. [Exit.

Ford. Hum ! ha ! is this a vision ? is this a dream ? do I sleep ? Master Ford, awake ; awake, master Ford ; there 's a hole made in your best coat, master Ford. This 'tis to be married ! this 'tis to have linen, and buck-baskets !—Well, I will proclaim myself what I am : I will now take the lecher ; he is at my house : he cannot 'scape me ; 'tis impossible he should ; he cannot creep into a halfpenny purse, nor into a pepper-box : but, lest the devil that guides him should aid him, I will search impossible places. Though what I am I cannot avoid, yet to be what I would not, shall not make me tame : if I have horns to make one mad, let the proverb go with me I 'll be horn mad. [Exit.

A C T I V.

SCENE I.

The street.

Enter MRS. PAGE, MRS. QUICKLY, and WILLIAM.

Mrs. Page. Is he at master Ford's already, think'st thou ?

Mrs. Quick. Sure, he is by this, or will be presently : but, truly, he is very courageous¹ mad about

¹ Outrageously.

his throwing into the water. Mistress Ford desires you to come suddenly.

Mrs. Page. I'll be with her by and by : I'll but bring my young man here to school. Look, where his master comes ; 'tis a playing-day, I see.

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS.

How now, sir Hugh ? no school to-day ?

Evans. No ; master Slender is let the boys leave to play.

Mrs. Quick. Blessing of his heart !

Mrs. Page. Sir Hugh, my husband says, my son profits nothing in the world at his book. I pray you, ask him some questions in his accidence.

Evans. Come hither, William ; hold up your head ; come.

Mrs. Page. Come on, sirrah ; hold up your head ; answer your master ; be not afraid.

Evans. William, how many numbers is in nouns ?

Wil. Two.

Mrs. Quick. Truly I thought there had been one number more ; because they say, od's nouns.

Evans. Peace your tatlings. What is fair, William ?

Wil. Pulcher.

Mrs. Quick. Polecats ! there are fairer things than polecats, sure.

Evans. You are a very simplicity 'oman ; I pray you, peace. What is *lapis*, William ?

Wil. A stone.

Evans. And what is a stone, William?

Wil. A pebble.

Evans. No, it is *lapis*: I pray you, remember in your prain.

Wil. *Lapis*.

Evans. That is good, William. What is he, William, that does lend articles?

Wil. Articles are borrowed of the pronoun, and be thus declined: *Singulariter, nominativo, hic, haec, hoc*.

Evans. *Nominativo, hig, hag, hog*;—pray you, mark: *genitivo, hujus*. Well, what is your accusative case?

Wil. *Accusativo, hinc*.

Evans. I pray you, have your remembrance, child. *Accusativo, hing, hang, hog*.

Mrs. Quick. Hang hog is Latin for bacon, I warrant you.

Evans. Leave your prabbles, 'oman. What is the focative case, William?

Wil. O—*vocativo, O*.

Evans. Remember, William; focative is, *caret*.

Mrs. Quick. And that's a good root.

Evans. 'Oman, forbear.

Mrs. Page. Peace.

Evans. What is your genitive case plural, William?

Wil. Genitive case?

Evans. Ay.

Wil. Genitive,—*horum, harum, horum.*

Mrs. Quick. Vengeance of Jenny's case! fie on her!—never name her, child, if she be a whore.

Evans. For shame, 'oman.

Mrs. Quick. You do ill to teach the child such words: he teaches him to hick and to hack, which they'll do fast enough of themselves; and to call *horum*:—fie upon you!

Evans. 'Oman, art thou lunatics? hast thou no understandings for thy cases, and the numbers of the genders? Thou art as foolish christian creatures, as I would desires.

Mrs. Page. Pr'ythee, hold thy peace.

Evans. Show me now, William, some declensions of your pronouns.

Wil. Forsooth, I have forgot.

Evans. It is *ki, kæ, cod*: if you forget your *kies*, your *kæs*, and your *cods*, you must be preeches.¹ Go your ways, and play: go.

Mrs. Page. He is a better scholar than I thought he was.

Evans. He is a good sprag² memory. Farewell, mistress Page.

Mrs. Page. Adieu, good sir Hugh. [*Exit Sir Hugh.*] Get you home, boy.—Come, we stay too long. [*Exeunt.*]

¹ Flogged.

² Ready.

SCENE II.

A room in Ford's house.

Enter FALSTAFF and MRS. FORD.

Fal. Mistress Ford, your sorrow hath eaten up my sufferance: I see, you are obsequious¹ in your love, and I profess requital to a hair's breadth; not only, mistress Ford, in the simple office of love, but in all the accoutrement, complement, and ceremony of it. But are you sure of your husband now?

Mrs. Ford. He 's a birding, sweet sir John.

Mrs. Page. [within.] What hoa, gossip Ford! what hoa!

Mrs. Ford. Step into the chamber, sir John.

[*Exit Falstaff.*]

Enter MRS. PAGE.

Mrs. Page. How now, sweetheart? who 's at home besides yourself?

Mrs. Ford. Why, none but mine own people.

Mrs. Page. Indeed?

Mrs. Ford. No, certainly.—Speak louder. [*aside.*]

Mrs. Page. Truly, I am so glad you have nobody here.

Mrs. Ford. Why?

Mrs. Page. Why, woman, your husband is in his old lunes² again: he so takes on³ yonder with my

¹ Sorrowful.

² Frenzy.

³ Rages.

husband ; so rails against all married mankind ; so curses all Eve's daughters, of what complexion soever ; and so buffets himself on the forehead, crying, ' Peer-out, peer-out ! '¹ that any madness, I ever yet beheld, seemed but tameness, civility, and patience, to this his distemper he is in now. I am glad the fat knight is not here.

Mrs. Ford. Why, does he talk of him ?

Mrs. Page. Of none but him ; and swears, he was carried out, the last time he searched for him, in a basket : protests to my husband, he is now here ; and hath drawn him and the rest of their company from their sport, to make another experiment of his suspicion : but I am glad the knight is not here ; now he shall see his own foolery.

Mrs. Ford. How near is he, mistress Page ?

Mrs. Page. Hard by ; at street end ; he will be here anon.

Mrs. Ford. I am undone ! —the knight is here.

Mrs. Page. Why, then you are utterly shamed, and he 's but a dead man. What a woman are you ! —Away with him ! away with him ! better shame than murder.

Mrs. Ford. Which way should he go ? how should I bestow him ? Shall I put him into the basket again ?

¹ Appear, horns.

Re-enter FALSTAFF.

Fal. No, I 'll come no more i' the basket. May I not go out, ere he come ?

Mrs. Page. Alas, three of master Ford's brothers watch the door with pistols, that none shall issue out; otherwise you might slip away ere he came. But what make you here ?¹

Fal. What shall I do?—I 'll creep up into the chimney.

Mrs. Ford. There they always use to discharge their birding-pieces. Creep into the kiln-hole.

Fal. Where is it?

Mrs. Ford. He will seek there, on my word. Neither press, coffer, chest, trunk, well, vault, but he hath an abstract² for the remembrance of such places, and goes to them by his note. There is no hiding you in the house.

Fal. I 'll go out then.

Mrs. Page. If you go out in your own semblance, you die, sir John. Unless you go out disguised,—

Mrs. Ford. How might we disguise him?

Mrs. Page. Alas the day, I know not. There is no woman's gown big enough for him; otherwise, he might put on a hat, a muffler,³ and a kerchief, and so escape.

Fal. Good hearts, devise something: any extremity, rather than a mischief.

¹ What do you here?

² Inventory.

³ A part of the dress that covered the face.

Mrs. Ford. My maid's aunt, the fat woman of Brentford, has a gown above.

Mrs. Page. On my word, it will serve him ; she's as big as he is : and there's her thrum'd hat,¹ and her muffler too. Run up, sir John.

Mrs. Ford. Go, go, sweet sir John : mistress Page and I will look some linen for your head.

Mrs. Page. Quick, quick ; we'll come dress you straight : put on the gown the while. [*Exit Falstaff.*]

Mrs. Ford. I would, my husband would meet him in this shape : he cannot abide the old woman of Brentford : he swears, she's a witch ; forbade her my house, and hath threatened to beat her.

Mrs. Page. Heaven guide him to thy husband's cudgel, and the devil guide his cudgel afterwards !

Mrs. Ford. But is my husband coming ?

Mrs. Page. Ay, in good sadness,² is he ; and talks of the basket too, howsoever he hath had intelligence.

Mrs. Ford. We'll try that ; for I'll appoint my men to carry the basket again, to meet him at the door with it, as they did last time.

Mrs. Page. Nay, but he'll be here presently : let's go dress him like the witch of Brentford.

Mrs. Ford. I'll first direct my men, what they shall do with the basket. Go up : I'll bring linen for him straight. [*Exit.*]

¹ Hat made of coarse woollen cloth.

² Seriously.

Mrs. Page. Hang him, dishonest varlet! we cannot misuse him enough.

We'll leave a proof, by that which we will do,

Wives may be merry, and yet honest too.

We do not act, that often jest and laugh:

'Tis old, but true, ' Still swine eat all the draf.¹'¹

[Exit.]

Re-enter MRS. FORD, with two Servants.

Mrs. Ford. Go, sirs, take the basket again on your shoulders; your master is hard at door: if he bid you set it down, obey him: quickly, despatch.

[Exit.]

1 Ser. Come, come, take it up.

2 Ser. Pray Heaven, it be not full of knight again.

1 Ser. I hope not; I had as lief bear so much lead.

Enter FORD, PAGE, SHALLOW, CAIUS, and SIR HUGH EVANS.

Ford. Ay, but if it prove true, master Page, have you any way then to unfool me again?—Set down the basket, villain.—Somebody call my wife.— You, youth in a basket, come out here!—O, you panderly rascals! there's a knot, a ging,² a pack, a conspiracy against me. Now shall the devil be shamed. What! wife, I say! come, come forth;

¹ Refuse, lees.

² Gang.

behold what honest clothes you send forth to bleaching.

Page. Why, this passes!¹ Master Ford, you are not to go loose any longer; you must be pinioned.

Evans. Why, this is lunatics! this is mad as a mad dog!

Shal. Indeed, master Ford, this is not well; indeed.

Enter MRS. FORD.

Ford. So say I too, sir.—Come hither, mistress Ford; mistress Ford, the honest woman, the modest wife, the virtuous creature, that hath the jealous fool to her husband!—I suspect without cause, mistress, do I?

Mrs. Ford. Heaven be my witness, you do, if you suspect me in any dishonesty.

Ford. Well said, brazen-face; hold it out.—Come forth, sirrah. [*Pulls the clothes out of the basket.*]

Page. This passes!

Mrs. Ford. Are you not ashamed? let the clothes alone.

Ford. I shall find you anon.

Evans. 'Tis unreasonable! Will you take up your wife's clothes? Come away.

Ford. Empty the basket, I say.

Mrs. Ford. Why, man, why,—

Ford. Master Page, as I am a man, there was one conveyed out of my house yesterday in this basket.

¹ Goes beyond all bounds.

Why may not he be there again ? In my house I am sure he is : my intelligence is true ; my jealousy is reasonable. Pluck me out all the linen.

Mrs. Ford. If you find a man there, he shall die a flea's death.

Page. Here 's no man.

Shal. By my fidelity, this is not well, master Ford ; this wrongs you.

Evans. Master Ford, you must pray, and not follow the imaginations of your own heart : this is jealousies.

Ford. Well, he 's not here I seek for.

Page. No, nor no where else, but in your brain.

Ford. Help to search my house this one time : if I find not what I seek, show no color for my extremity,¹ let me for ever be your table-sport ; let them say of me, As jealous as Ford, that searched a hollow walnut for his wife's leman.² Satisfy me once more ; once more search with me.

Mrs. Ford. What hoa, mistress Page ! come you, and the old woman, down ; my husband will come into the chamber.

Ford. Old woman ! What old woman 's that ?

Mrs. Ford. Why, it is 'my maid's aunt of Brentford.

Ford. A witch, a quean,³ an old cozening quean ! Have I not forbid her my house ? She comes of er-

¹ Make no excuses for my extravagant behaviour.

² Lover. ³ A worthless woman.

rands, does she? We are simple men; we do not know what's brought to pass under the profession of fortune-telling. She works by charms, by spells, by the figure, and such daubery¹ as this is; beyond our element: we know nothing.—Come down, you witch, you hag you; come down, I say.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, good, sweet husband;—good gentlemen, let him not strike the old woman.

Enter Falstaff in women's clothes, led by Mrs. Page.

Mrs. Page. Come, mother Prat, come, give me your hand.

Ford. I'll prat her.—Out of my door, you witch! [beats him.] you rag, you baggage, you polecat, you ronyon! out! out! I'll conjure you, I'll fortune-tell you. [*Exit Falstaff.*]

Mrs. Page. Are you not ashamed? I think, you have killed the poor woman.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, he will do it.—'Tis a goodly credit for you.

Ford. Hang her, witch!

Evans. By yea and no, I think, the 'oman is a witch indeed: I like not when a 'oman has a great peard; I spy a great peard under her muffler.

Ford. Will you follow, gentlemen? I beseech you, follow; see but the issue of my jealousy: if I cry out thus upon no trail,² never trust me when I open³ again.

¹ Counterfeits.

² Scent.

³ Cry out.

Page. Let's obey his humor a little farther.
Come, gentlemen.

[*Exeunt Page, Ford, Shallow, and Evans.*]

Mrs. Page. Trust me, he beat him most pitifully.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, by the mass, that he did not;
he beat him most unpitifully, methought.

Mrs. Page. I'll have the cudgel hallowed, and
hung o'er the altar: it hath done meritorious service.

Mrs. Ford. What think you? May we, with the
warrant of womanhood, and the witness of a good
conscience, pursue him with any farther revenge?

Mrs. Page. The spirit of wantonness is, sure,
scared out of him: if the devil have him not in fee-
simple, with fine and recovery,¹ he will never, I
think, in the way of waste, attempt us again.²

Mrs. Ford. Shall we tell our husbands how we
have served him?

Mrs. Page. Yes, by all means; if it be but to
scrape the figures³ out of your husband's brains. If
they can find in their hearts, the poor unvirtuous
fat knight shall be any farther afflicted, we two will
still be the ministers.

Mrs. Ford. I'll warrant, they'll have him pub-
licly shamed; and, methinks, there would be no
period⁴ to the jest, should he not be publicly
shamed.

¹ Have not the right of perpetual possession, without the
power of redemption.

² He will not make farther attempts to destroy our repu-
tation. ³ Conceits. ⁴ No proper catastrophe.

Mrs. Page. Come, to the forge with it then, shape it: I would not have things cool. [Exit].

SCENE III.

A room in the Garter Inn.

Enter HOST and BARDOLPH.

Bar. Sir, the Germans desire to have three of your horses: the duke himself will be to-morrow at court, and they are going to meet him.

Host. What duke should that be, comes so secretly? I hear not of him in the court. Let me speak with the gentlemen; they speak English?

Bar. Ay, sir; I'll call them to you.

Host. They shall have my horses; but I'll make them pay, I'll sause them:¹ they have had my houses a week at command; I have turned away my other guests: they must come off;² I'll sause them. Come. [Exit].

SCENE IV.

A room in Ford's house.

Enter PAGE, FORD, MRS. PAGE, MRS. FORD, and SIR HUGH EVANS.

Evans. 'Tis one of the pest disretions of a 'oman as ever I did look upon.

¹ I'll charge at a high price.

² Pay.

Page. And did he send you both these letters at an instant?

Mrs. Page. Within a quarter of an hour.

Ford. Pardon me, wife. Henceforth do what thou wilt;

I rather will suspect the sun with cold,
Than thee with wantonness: now doth thy honor stand,

In him that was of late an heretic,
As firm as faith.

Page. 'Tis well, 'tis well; no more.

Be not as extreme in submission
As in offence;

But let our plot go forward: let our wives
Yet once again, to make us public sport,
Appoint a meeting with this old fat fellow,
Where we may take him, and disgrace him for it.

Ford. There is no better way than that they spoke of.

Page. How! to send him word they'll meet him in the park at midnight? fie, fie; he'll never come.

Evans. You say, he has been thrown into the rivers; and has been grievously peaten, as an old 'oman: methinks, there should be terrors in him, that he should not come; methinks, his flesh is punished, he shall have no desires.

Page. So think I too.

Mrs. Ford. Devise but how you'll use him when he comes,

And let us two devise to bring him thither.

Mrs. Page. There is an old tale goes, that Herne
the hunter,

Sometime a keeper here in Windsor forest,
Doth all the winter time, at still midnight,
Walk round about an oak, with great ragg'd horns ;
And there he blasts the tree, and takes¹ the cattle ;
And makes milch-kine yield blood, and shakes a
chain

In a most hideous and dreadful manner :
You have heard of such a spirit ; and well you
know,

The superstitious idle-headed eld² :
Received, and did deliver to our age,
This tale of Herne the hunter for a truth.

Page. Why, yet there want not many, that do fear
In deep of night to walk by this Herne's oak :
But what of this ?

Mrs. Ford. Marry, this is our device ;
That Falstaff at that oak shall meet with us,
Disguised like Herne, with huge horns on his head.

Page. Well, let it not be doubted but he 'll come,
And in this shape. When you have brought him
thither,

What shall be done with him ? what is your plot ?

Mrs. Page. That likewise have we thought upon,
and thus :

Nan Page my daughter, and my little son,
And three or four more of their growth, we 'll dress

¹ Strikes.

² Old persons.

Like urchins,¹ ouphes,² and fairies, green and white,
 With rounds of waxen tapers on their heads,
 And rattles in their hands ; upon a sudden,
 As Falstaff, she, and I, are newly met,
 Let them from forth a saw-pit rush at once
 With some diffused³ song ; upon their sight,
 We two in great amazedness will fly :
 Then let them all encircle him about,
 And, fairy-like, to-pinch⁴ the unclean knight ;
 And ask him, why, that hour of fairy revel,
 In their so sacred paths he dares to tread,
 In shape profane.

Mrs. Ford. And till he tell the truth,
 Let the supposed fairies pinch him sound,
 And burn him with their tapers.

Mrs. Page. The truth being known,
 We 'll all present ourselves ; dis-horn the spirit,
 And mock him home to Windsor.

Ford. The children must
 Be practised well to this, or they 'll ne'er do 't.

Evans. I will teach the children their behaviours ;
 and I will be like a jack-an-apes⁵ also, to burn the
 knight with my taber.

Ford. That will be excellent. I 'll go buy them
 vizards.

¹ Hedge-hogs.

² Elves.

³ Wild.

⁴ The pleonasm of 'to,' in the composition of verbs, is very common in our early English poets.

⁵ An ape.

Mrs. Page. My Nan shall be the queen of all the fairies,
Finely attired in a robe of white.

Page. That silk will I go buy ;—and in that time Shall master Slender steal my Nan away, [aside. And marry her at Eton.—Go, send to Falstaff straight.

Ford. Nay, I 'll to him again in name of Brook : He 'll tell me all his purpose. Sure, he 'll come.

Mrs. Page. Fear not you that. Go, get us properties,¹ And tricking² for our fairies.

Evans. Let us about it : it is admirable pleasures, and fery honest knaveries.

[*Exeunt Page, Ford, and Evans.*]

Mrs. Page. Go, mistress Ford,
Send Quickly to sir John, to know his mind.

[*Exit Mrs. Ford.*]

I 'll to the doctor ; he hath my good will,
And none but he, to marry with Nan Page.
That Slender, though well landed, is an idiot ;
And he my husband best of all affects :
The doctor is well money'd, and his friends
Potent at court : he, none but he, shall have her,
Though twenty thousand worthier come to crave her.

[*Exit.*]

¹ Little incidental necessaries appertaining to a theatre.

² Fit dresses.

SCENE V.

A room in the Garter Inn.

Enter HOST and SIMPLE.

Host. What wouldest thou have, boor? what, thick-skin? speak, breathe, discuss; brief, short, quick, snap.

Sim. Marry, sir, I come to speak with sir John Falstaff from master Slender.

Host. There's his chamber, his house, his castle, his standing-bed, and truckle-bed;¹ 'tis painted about with the story of the prodigal, fresh and new. Go, knock and call; he'll speak like an Anthropophaginian² unto thee. Knock, I say.

Sim. There's an old woman, a fat woman, gone up into his chamber; I'll be so bold as stay, sir, till she come down: I come to speak with her, indeed.

Host. Ha! a fat woman! the knight may be robbed: I'll call.—Bully knight! Bully sir John! speak from thy lungs military. Art thou there? it is thine host, thine Ephesian,³ calls.

Fal. [above.] How now, mine host?

Host. Here's a Bohemian-Tartar⁴ tarries the coming down of thy fat woman. Let her descend,

¹ A bed that runs on wheels; on which servants were accustomed to sleep. ² Cannibal.

³ This was a cant term of the time.

⁴ Probably in allusion to the wild appearance of Simple. Gipsies are called Bohemians.

bully ; let her descend ; my chambers are honorable.
Fie ! privacy ? fie !

Enter FALSTAFF.

Fal. There was, mine host, an old fat woman even now with me ; but she 's gone.

Sim. Pray you, sir, was 't not the wise woman of Brentford ?

Fal. Ay, marry, was it, muscle-shell.¹ What would you with her ?

Sim. My master, sir, my master Slender, sent to her, seeing her go thorough the streets, to know, sir, whether one Nym, sir, that beguiled him of a chain, had the chain, or no.

Fal. I spake with the old woman about it.

Sim. And what says she, I pray, sir ?

Fal. Marry, she says, that the very same man, that beguiled master Slender of his chain, cozened him of it.

Sim. I would, I could have spoken with the woman herself. I had other things to have spoken with her too, from him.

Fal. What are they ? let us know.

Host. Ay, come ; quick.

Sim. I may not conceal them, sir.

Fal. Conceal them, or thou diest.

Sim. Why, sir, they were nothing but about

¹ He calls Simple 'muscle-shell,' because he stood open-mouthed.

mistress Anne Page ; to know, if it were my master's fortune to have her, or no.

Fal. 'Tis, 'tis his fortune.

Sim. What, sir ?

Fal. To have her,—or no. Go ; say, the woman told me so.

Sim. May I be so bold to say so, sir ?

Fal. Ay, sir Tike ; who more bold ?

Sim. I thank your worship : I shall make my master glad with these tidings. [Exit Simple.

Host. Thou art clerkly,¹ thou art clerkly, sir John. Was there a wise woman with thee ?

Fal. Ay, that there was, mine host ; one, that hath taught me more wit than ever I learned before in my life : and I paid nothing for it neither, but was paid for my learning.

Enter BARDOLPH.

Bar. Out, alas, sir ! cozenage ! mere cozenage !

Host. Where be my horses ? speak well of them, varletto.

Bar. Run away with the cozeners : for so soon as I came beyond Eton, they threw me off, from behind one of them, in a slough of mire ; and set spurs, and away, like three German devils, three Doctor Faustuses.

Host. They are gone but to meet the duke, vil-

¹ Scholar-like.

lain : do not say, they be fled ; Germans are honest men.

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS.

Evans. Where is mine host ?

Host. What is the matter, sir ?

Evans. Have a care of your entertainments : there is a friend of mine come to town, tells me, there is three couzin germans, that has cozened all the hosts of Readings, of Maidenhead, of Colebrook, of horses and money. I tell you for good will, look you : you are wise, and full of gibes and vlouting-stogs ; and 'tis not convenient you should be cozened. Fare you well.

[*Exit.*]

Enter CAIUS.

Caius. Vere is mine host *de Jarterre* ?

Host. Here, master doctor, in perplexity, and doubtful dilemma.

Caius. I cannot tell vat is dat. But it is tell-a me, dat you make grand preparation for a duke de Jarmany : by my trot, dere is no duke, dat de court is know to come : I tell you for good vill : adieu.

[*Exit.*]

Host. Hue and cry, villain, go :— assist me, knight ; I am undone :— fly, run, hue and cry, villain ! I am undone ! [*Exeunt Host and Bardolph.*]

Fal. I would, all the world might be cozened ; for I have been cozened, and beaten too. If it should come to the ear of the court, how I have

been transformed, and how my transformation hath been washed and cudgeled, they would melt me out of my fat, drop by drop, and liquor fishermen's boots with me; I warrant, they would whip me with their fine wits, till I were as crest-fallen as a dried pear. I never prospered since I forswore myself at primero.¹ Well, if my wind were but long enough to say my prayers, I would repent.—

Enter MRS. QUICKLY.

Now, whence come you?

Mrs. Quick. From the two parties, forsooth.

Fal. The devil take one party, and his dam the other, and so they shall be both bestowed! I have suffered more for their sakes, more, than the villainous inconstancy of man's disposition is able to bear.

Mrs. Quick. And have not they suffered? Yes, I warrant; speciously² one of them: mistress Ford, good heart, is beaten black and blue, that you cannot see a white spot about her.

Fal. What tellest thou me of black and blue? I was beaten myself into all the colors of the rainbow; and I was like to be apprehended for the witch of Brentford: but that my admirable dexterity of wit, my counterfeiting the action of an old woman, de-

¹ A fashionable game at cards in our author's time.

² Especially.

livered me, the knave constable had set me i' the stocks, i' the common stocks, for a witch.

Mrs. Quick. Sir, let me speak with you in your chamber: you shall hear how things go; and, I warrant, to your content. Here is a letter will say somewhat. Good hearts, what ado here is to bring you together! Sure, one of you does not serve Heaven well, that you are so crossed!

Fal. Come up into my chamber.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.

Another room in the Garter Inn.

Enter FENTON and HOST.

Host. Master Fenton, talk not to me; my mind is heavy: I will give-over all.

Fen. Yet hear me speak. Assist me in my purpose,

And, as I am a gentleman, I 'll give thee
A hundred pound in gold, more than your loss.

Host. I will hear you, master Fenton; and I will, at the least, keep your counsel.

Fen. From time to time I have acquainted you
With the dear love I bear to fair Anne Page;
Who, mutually, hath answer'd my affection
(So far forth as herself might be her chooser)
Even to my wish: I have a letter from her
Of such contents as you will wonder at;
The mirth whereof so larded with my matter,
That neither, singly, can be manifested,
Without the show of both;—wherein fat Falstaff

Hath a great scene :¹ the image² of the jest
[showing the letter.]

I'll show you here at large. Hark, good mine host :
To-night at Herne's oak, just 'twixt twelve and one,
Must my sweet Nan present the fairy queen ;
The purpose why, is here ;³ in which disguise,
While other jests are something rank on foot,⁴
Her father hath commanded her to slip
Away with Slender, and with him at Eton
Immediately to marry : she hath consented :
Now, sir,
Her mother, even strong⁵ against that match,
And firm for doctor Caius, hath appointed
That he shall likewise shuffle her away,
While other sports are tasking of⁶ their minds,
And at the deanery, where a priest attends,
Straight marry her : to this her mother's plot,
She, seemingly obedient, likewise hath
Made promise to the doctor.—Now, thus it rests :
Her father means she shall be all in white ;
And in that habit, when Slender sees his time
To take her by the hand, and bid her go,
She shall go with him :—her mother hath intended,
The better to denote her to the doctor,
(For they must all be mask'd and vizarded)
That, quaint⁷ in green, she shall be loose enrobed,

¹ Bears a conspicuous character.

² Representation. ³ In this letter.

⁴ While they are busily pursuing their own merriment.

⁵ As strong. ⁶ Occupying. ⁷ Fantastically.

With ribands pendent, flaring, 'bout her head ;
And when the doctor spies his vantage ripe,
To pinch her by the hand, and, on that token,
The maid hath given consent to go with him.

Host. Which means she to deceive ? father or
mother ?

Fen. Both, my good host, to go along with me :
And here it rests,—that you 'll procure the vicar
To stay for me at church, 'twixt twelve and one,
And, in the lawful name of marrying,
To give our hearts united ceremony.

Host. Well, husband your device ; I 'll to the
vicar :

Bring you the maid, you shall not lack a priest.

Fen. So shall I evermore be bound to thee ;
Besides, I 'll make a present recompense. [*Exeunt.*

A C T V.

SCENE I.

A room in the Garter Inn.

Enter FALSTAFF and MRS. QUICKLY.

Fal. Pr'ythee, no more prattling :—go.—I 'll hold.¹ This is the third time ; I hope, good luck lies in odd numbers. Away, go ; they say, there is divinity in odd numbers, either in nativity, chance, or death.—Away.

¹ I 'll keep the appointment.

Mrs. Quick. I 'll provide you a chain ; and I 'll do what I can to get you a pair of horns.

Fal. Away, I say ; time wears : hold up your head, and mince.¹ [Exit *Mrs. Quickly.*]

Enter FORD.

How now, master Brook ? Master Brook, the matter will be known to-night, or never. Be you in the Park about midnight, at Herne's oak, and you shall see wonders.

Ford. Went you not to her yesterday, sir, as you told me you had appointed ?

Fal. I went to her, master Brook, as you see, like a poor old man ; but I came from her, master Brook, like a poor old woman. That same knave, Ford her husband, hath the finest mad devil of jealousy in him, master Brook, that ever governed frenzy. I will tell you.—He beat me grievously, in the shape of a woman ; for in the shape of man, master Brook, I fear not Goliath with a weaver's beam ; because I know also, life is a shuttle. I am in haste ; go along with me ; I 'll tell you all, master Brook. Since I plucked geese,² played truant, and whipped top, I knew not what it was to be beaten, till lately. Follow me : I 'll tell you strange things of this knave Ford ; on whom to-night I will be revenged, and I will deliver his wife

¹ 'To mince' is to walk with affected delicacy.

² To strip a living goose of his feathers was formerly an act of puerile barbarity.

into your hand.—Follow: strange things in hand,
master Brook! follow. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

Windsor Park.

Enter PAGE, SHALLOW, and SLENDER.

Page. Come, come; we'll couch i' the castle-ditch, till we see the light of our fairies.—Remember, son Slender, my daughter.

Slen. Ay, forsooth; I have spoke with her, and we have a nay-word,¹ how to know one another. I come to her in white, and cry, 'mum;' she cries, 'budget;' and by that we know one another.

Shal. That's good too: but what needs either your 'mum,' or her 'budget?' the white will decipher her well enough.—It hath struck ten o'clock.

Page. The night is dark; light and spirits will become it well. Heaven prosper our sport! No man means evil but the devil, and we shall know him by his horns. Let's away; follow me. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.

The street in Windsor.

Enter MRS. PAGE, MRS. FORD, and CAIUS.

Mrs. Page. Master doctor, my daughter is in

¹ Watch-word.

green: when you see your time, ke her by the hand, away with her to the deanery, and despatch it quickly. Go before into the park; we two must go together.

Caius. I know vat I have to do. Adieu.

Mrs. Page. Fare you well, sir. [Exit *Caius*. My husband will not rejoice so much at the abuse of Falstaff, as he will chafe at the doctor's marrying my daughter: but 'tis no matter; better a little chiding, than a great deal of heart-break.

Mrs. Ford. Where is Nan now, and her troop of fairies, and the Welsh devil, Hugh?

Mrs. Page. They are all couched in a pit hard by Herne's oak, with obscured lights; which, at the very instant of Falstaff's and our meeting, they will at once display to the night.

Mrs. Ford. That cannot choose but amaze him.

Mrs. Page. If he be not amazed, he will be mocked; if he be amazed, he will every way be mocked.

Mrs. Ford. We'll betray him finely.

Mrs. Page. Against such lewdsters,¹ and their lechery,

Those that betray them do no treachery.

Mrs. Ford. The hour draws on. To the oak! to the oak!

[*Exeunt*.]

¹ Prodigates.

SCENE IV.

*Windsor Park.**Enter SIR HUGH EVANS, and Fairies.*

Evans. Trib, trib, fairies; come; and remember your parts: be pold, I pray you; follow me into the pit; and when I give the watch-'ords, do as I pid you. Come, come; trib, trib. [Exit.]

SCENE V.

*Another part of the park.**Enter FALSTAFF disguised, with a buck's head on.*

Fal. The Windsor bell hath struck twelve; the minute draws on. Now, the hot-blooded gods assist me!—Remember, Jove, thou wast a bull for thy Europa; love set on thy horns.—O powerful love! that, in some respects, makes a beast a man; in some other, a man a beast.—You were also, Jupiter, a swan, for the love of Leda.—O, omnipotent love! how near the god drew to the complexion of a goose!—A fault done first in the form of a beast;—O Jove, a beastly fault! and then another fault in the semblance of a fowl; think on't, Jove; a foul fault.—When gods have hot backs, what shall poor men do? For me, I am here a Windsor stag; and the fattest, I think, i' the forest. Send me a cool rut-time, Jove, or who can blame me to piss my tallow? Who comes here? my doe?

Enter MRS. FORD and MRS. PAGE.

Mrs. Ford. Sir John ! art thou there, my deer ?
my male deer ?

Fal. My doe with the black scut !—Let the sky
rain potatoes ; let it thunder to the tune of ‘ Green
Sleeves ;’ hail kissing-comfits,¹ and snow eringoes ;²
let there come a tempest of provocation, I will
shelter me here. [embracing her.]

Mrs. Ford. Mistress Page is come with me, sweet-
heart.

Fal. Divide me like a bribe-buck,³ each a haunch :
I will keep my sides to myself, my shoulders for the
fellow of this walk,⁴ and my horns I bequeath your
husbands. Am I a woodman ? ha ! Speak I like
Herne the hunter ?—Why, now is Cupid a child of
conscience ; he makes restitution. As I am a true
spirit, welcome ! [noise within.]

Mrs. Page. Alas ! what noise ?

Mrs. Ford. Heaven forgive our sins !

Fal. What should this be ?

Mrs. Ford. { Away, away. [they run off.]
Mrs. Page. {

Fal. I think, the devil will not have me damned,
lest the oil that is in me should set hell on fire ; he
would never else cross me thus.

¹ Sugar plums. ² Sea-holly.

³ A buck sent for a bribe.

⁴ The shoulders of deer were formerly claimed by keepers
as a perquisite.

Enter SIR HUGH EVANS, like a satyr; MRS. QUICKLY, and PISTOL; ANNE PAGE, as the fairy queen, attended by her brother and others, dressed like fairies, with waxen tapers on their heads.

Mrs. Quick. Fairies, black, grey, green, and white,
You moonshine revellers, and shades of night,
You orphan-heirs of fixed destiny,¹
Attend your office, and your quality.²—
Crier Hobgoblin, make the fairy o-yes.³

Pis. Elves, list your names; silence, you airy
toys.
Cricket, to Windsor chimneys shalt thou leap:
Where fires thou find'st unraked, and hearths un-
swept,
There pinch the maids as blue as bilberry:⁴
Our radiant queen hates sluts, and sluttish.

Fal. They are fairies; he, that speaks to them,
shall die:
I'll wink and couch. No man their works must eye.
[lies down on his face.

Evans. Where's Pede?—Go you, and where you
find a maid,
That, ere she sleep, has thrice her prayers said,
Raise up the organs of her fantasy,
Sleep she as sound as careless infancy;

¹ 'Orphans in respect of your real parents, and now dependent only on Destiny herself.'—Farmer.

² Companions.

³ The usual proclamation.

⁴ A sweet shrub, called a whortleberry.

But those as sleep, and think not on their sins,
Pinch them, arms, legs, backs, shoulders, sides, and
shins.

Mrs. Quick. About, about ;
Search Windsor Castle, elves, within and out :
Strew good luck, ouphes,¹ on every sacred room ;
That it may stand till the perpetual doom,
In state as wholesome, as in state 'tis fit ;
Worthy the owner, and the owner it.
The several chairs of order look you scour
With juice of balm, and every precious flower :
Each fair instalment, coat, and several crest,
With loyal blazon evermore be bless'd !
And nightly, meadow-fairies, look, you sing,
Like to the Garter's compass, in a ring :
The expressure ² that it bears, green let it be,
More fertile-fresh than all the field to see ;
And *Hony soit qui mal y pense*, write,
In emerald tufts, flowers purple, blue, and white ;
Like sapphire, pearl, and rich embroidery,
Buckled below fair knighthood's bending knee : }
Fairies use flowers for their charactery.
Away ; disperse. But, till 'tis one o'clock,
Our dance of custom, round about the oak
Of Herne the hunter, let us not forget.

Evans. Pray you, lock hand in hand ; yourselves
in order set :
And twenty glow-worms shall our lanterns be,

¹ Elves

² Impression.

To guide our measure round about the tree.
But, stay ; I smell a man of middle earth.

Fal. Heavens defend me from that Welsh fairy,
lest he transform me to a piece of cheese !

Pis. Vile worm, thou wast o'er-look'd even in
thy birth.¹

Mrs. Quick. With trial-fire touch me his finger-end :
If he be chaste, the flame will back descend,
And turn him to no pain ; but if he start,
It is the flesh of a corrupted heart.

Pis. A trial, come.

Evans. Come, will this wood take fire ?

[*They burn him with their tapers.*

Fal. Oh, oh, oh !

Mrs. Quick. Corrupt, corrupt, and tainted in desire !
About him, fairies ; sing a scornful rhyme :
And, as you trip, still pinch him to your time.

Evans. It is right ; indeed he is full of lecheries
and iniquity.

SONG.

Fie on sinful fantasy !
Fie on lust and luxury !
Lust is but a bloody fire,²
Kindled with unchaste desire,
Fed in heart ; whose flames aspire,
As thoughts do blow them higher and higher.
Pinch him, fairies, mutually ;
Pinch him for his villany ;
Pinch him, and burn him, and turn him about,
Till candles, and star-light, and moonshine be out.

During this song, the fairies pinch Falstaff. Doctor

¹ Slighted as soon as born. ² A fire in the blood.

Caius comes one way, and steals away a fairy in green ; Slender another way, and takes off a fairy in white ; and Fenton comes, and steals away Mrs. Anne Page. A noise of hunting is made within. All the fairies run away. Falstaff pulls off his buck's head, and rises.

Enter PAGE, FORD, MRS. PAGE, and MRS. FORD.

They lay hold on him.

Page. Nay, do not fly : I think, we have watch'd you now.

Will none but Herne the hunter serve your turn ?

Mrs. Page. I pray you, come ; hold up the jest no higher.—

Now, good sir John, how like you Windsor wives ? See you these, husband ? do not these fair yokes ¹ Become the forest better than the town ?

Ford. Now, sir, who's a cuckold now ?—Master Brook, Falstaff's a knave, a cuckoldly knave ; here are his horns, master Brook : and, master Brook, he hath enjoyed nothing of Ford's but his buck-basket, his cudgel, and twenty pounds of money, which must be paid to master Brook : his horses are arrested for it, master Brook.

Mrs. Ford. Sir John, we have had ill luck ; we could never meet. I will never take you for my love again, but I will always count you my deer.

Fal. I do begin to perceive that I am made an ass.

¹ Horns.

Ford. Ay, and an ox too : both the proofs are extant.

Fal. And these are not fairies ? I was three or four times in the thought, they were not fairies : and yet the guiltiness of my mind, the sudden surprise of my powers, drove the grossness of the foppery into a received belief, in despite of the teeth of all rhyme and reason, that they were fairies. See now, how wit may be made a Jack-a-lent,¹ when 'tis upon ill employment !

Evans. Sir John Falstaff, serve Got, and leave your desires, and fairies will not pinse you.

Ford. Well said, fairy Hugh.

Evans. And leave you your jealousies too, I pray you.

Ford. I will never mistrust my wife again, till thou art able to woo her in good English.

Fal. Have I laid my brain in the sun, and dried it, that it wants matter to prevent so gross o'er-reaching as this ? Am I ridden with a Welsh goat too ? Shall I have a coxcomb of frize ?² 'tis time I were choked with a piece of toasted cheese.

Evans. Seese is not good to give putter ; your belly is all putter.

Fal. Seese and putter ! Have I lived to stand at the taunt of one that makes fritters of English ? This is enough to be the decay of lust and late-walking through the realm.

¹ A puppet thrown at in Lent, like Shrove cocks.

² A fool's cap of Welsh materials.

Mrs. Page. Why, sir John, do you think, though we would have thrust virtue out of our hearts by the head and shoulders, and have given ourselves without scruple to hell, that ever the devil could have made you our delight?

Ford. What a hodge-pudding? ¹ a bag of flax?

Mrs. Page. A puffed man?

Page. Old, cold, withered, and of intolerable entrails?

Ford. And one that is as slanderous as Satan?

Page. And as poor as Job?

Ford. And as wicked as his wife?

Evans. And given to fornications, and to taverns, and sack, and wine, and metheglins,³ and to drinkings, and swearings, and starings, pribbles and prabbles?

Fal. Well, I am your theme; you have the start
of me; I am dejected; I am not able to answer the
Welsh flannel: ⁴ ignorance itself is a plummet o'er
me: ⁵ use me as you will.

Ford. Marry, sir, we'll bring you to Windsor, to one master Brook, that you have cozened of money, to whom you should have been a pander: over

¹ A huge compound of evil ingredients.

² Enormous. ³ Sweet fermented drinks.

⁴ Flannel was originally the manufacture of Wales.

* Serves to point my obliquities. 'Allusion appears to be made,' says Mr. Henley, 'to the examination of a carpenter's work by the plummet held over it, of which line sir Hugh is here represented as the lead.'

and above that you have suffered, I think, to repay that money will be a biting affliction.

Mrs. Ford. Nay, husband, let that go to make amends :

Forgive that sum, and so we 'll all be friends.

Ford. Well, here's my hand; all's forgiven at last.

Page. Yet be cheerful, knight : thou shalt eat a posset to-night at my house ; where I will desire thee to laugh at my wife, that now laughs at thee. Tell her, master Slender hath married her daughter.

Mrs. Page. Doctors doubt that : if Anne Page be my daughter, she is, by this, doctor Caius' wife.

[*aside.*]

Enter SLENDER.

Slen. Whoo, ho ! ho ! father Page !

Page. Son ! how now ? how now, son ? have you despatched ?

Slen. Despatched ?—I'll make the best in Gloucestershire know on 't ; would I were hanged, la, else.

Page. Of what, son ?

Slen. I came yonder at Eton to marry mistress Anne Page, and she's a great lubberly boy. If it had not been i' the church, I would have swinged him, or he should have swinged me. If I did not think it had been Anne Page, would I might never stir ; and 'tis a post-master's boy.

Page. Upon my life then you took the wrong.

Slen. What need you tell me that ? I think so, when I took a boy for a girl. If I had been married

to him, for all he was in woman's apparel, I would not have had him.

Page. Why, this is your own folly. Did not I tell you, how you should know my daughter by her garments?

Slen. I went to her in white, and cried 'mum,' and she cried 'budget,' as Anne and I had appointed; and yet it was not Anne, but a postmaster's boy.

Evans. Jeshu! Master Slender, cannot you see but marry boys?

Page. O, I am vexed at heart. What shall I do?

Mrs. Page. Good George, be not angry: I knew of your purpose; turned my daughter into green; and, indeed, she is now with the doctor at the deanery, and there married.

Enter Caius.

Caius. Vere is mistress Page? By gar, I am cozened; I ha' married *un garçon*, a boy; *un paisan*, by gar, a boy; it is not Anne Page: by gar, I am cozened.

Mrs. Page. Why, did you take her in green?

Caius. Ay, be gar, and 'tis a boy: be gar, I'll raise all Windsor. [Exit Caius.]

Ford. This is strange. Who hath got the right Anne?

Page. My heart misgives me. Here comes master Fenton.

Enter FENTON and ANNE PAGE.

How now, master Fenton ?

Anne. Pardon, good father ! good my mother,
pardon !

Page. Now, mistress ! how chance you went not
with master Slender ?

Mrs. Page. Why went you not with master doc-
tor, maid ?

Fen. You do amaze her.¹ Hear the truth of it.
You would have married her most shamefully,
Where there was no proportion held in love.
The truth is, she and I, long since contracted,
Are now so sure,² that nothing can dissolve us.
The offence is holy, that she hath committed :
And this deceit loses the name of craft,
Of disobedience, or unduteous title ;
Since therein she doth evitate³ and shun
A thousand irreligious cursed hours,
Which forced marriage would have brought upon her.

Ford. Stand not amazed : here is no remedy :—
In love, the heavens themselves do guide the state ;
Money buys lands, and wives are sold by fate.

Fal. I am glad, though you have ta'en a special
stand to strike at me, that your arrow hath glanced.

Page. Well, what remedy ? Fenton, Heaven give
thee joy !

¹ Confound her by your questions.

² United.

³ Avoid.

What cannot be eschew'd, must be embraced.

Fal. When night-dogs run, all sorts of deer are chased.

Evans. I will dance and eat plums at your wedding.

Mrs. Page. Well, I will muse no farther.—
Master Fenton,

Heaven give you many, many merry days!—

Good husband, let us every one go home,
And laugh this sport o'er by a country fire;
Sir John and all.

Ford. Let it be so.—Sir John,
To master Brook you yet shall hold your word;
For he, to-night, shall lie with mistress Ford.

[*Exeunt.*]

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

HISTORICAL NOTICE

OR

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

The primary source of the fable of this play is to be traced to a story in the Ecatomithi of Giraldi Cinthio, which was repeated in the tragic histories of Belleforest; but Shakspeare's immediate original was the play of Promos and Cassandra of George Whetstone, published in 1578. 'This story,' says Mr. Steevens, 'which, in the hands of Whetstone, produced little more than barren insipidity, under the culture of Shakspeare, became fertile of entertainment. The old play of Promos and Cassandra exhibits an almost complete embryo of Measure for Measure; yet the hints on which it is formed are so slight, that it is nearly as impossible to detect them, as it is to point out in the acorn the future ramifications of the oak.'

Doctor Johnson, speaking of this play, says, 'I cannot but suspect that some other had new-modelled the novel of Cinthio, or written a story, which in some particulars resembled it, and that Cinthio was not the author whom Shakspeare immediately followed. The emperor in Cinthio is named Maximine: the duke, in Shakspeare's enumeration of the persons of the drama, is called Vincentio. This appears a very slight remark; but since the duke has no name in the play, nor is ever mentioned but by his title, why should he be called Vincentio among the persons, but because

SHAK.

II.

I

the name was copied from the story, and placed superfluously at the head of the list by the mere habit of transcription? It is therefore likely that there was then a story of Vincentio, duke of Vienna, different from that of Maximine, emperor of the Romans.

'Of this play, the light or comic part is very natural and pleasing; but the grave scenes, if a few passages be excepted, have more labor than elegance. The plot is rather intricate than artful. The time of the action is indefinite: some time, we know not how much, must have elapsed between the recess of the duke and the imprisonment of Claudio; for he must have learned the story of Mariana in his disguise, or he delegated his power to a man already known to be corrupted. The unities of action and place are sufficiently preserved.'

A R G U M E N T.

Vincentio, duke of Vienna, anxious to reform the laxity of public morals, which too great remissness on the part of his government had introduced, invests Angelo, an officer renowned for rigid justice, with unlimited authority during his pretended absence ; and, having assumed the habit of a friar, is enabled in this disguise to view attentively the proceedings of his deputy. A young lady of the city, named Juliet, proves pregnant by her betrothed lover, who, according to an old penal enactment, is sentenced by the severe governor to lose his head. Isabella, the sister of the culprit, intercedes for the life of her brother with Angelo, who becomes deeply enamored, and proposes her dishonor as the price of his compliance with her petition. The virtuous maiden spurns at the proffered terms, and flies to Claudio, to whom she relates the perfidy of the governor, exhorting him to submit to his fate with fortitude ; but the fear of death overpowers his resolution, and he implores his sister to yield to the solicitations of the deputy ; which request she rejects with abhorrence. In the mean time the disguised duke has become acquainted with Mariana, a lady formerly affianced to Angelo, who is persuaded to keep a private assignation with her husband, which Isabella has feigned to make in her own name, to secure the safety of her brother. The inhuman tyrant, supposing that he has now perpetrated his object, and dreading the vengeance of the injured Claudio, sends orders to the prison for his immediate execution. The duke now pretends to return from his travels, and Angelo is publicly convicted of murder and seduction both by Isabella and his master ; and is about to suffer the punishment of his crimes, when the entreaties of his deserted wife, and the unexpected appearance of Claudio, who had been rescued from death by the interposition of the disguised duke, preserve him from the fate which he has so justly merited.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

VINCENTIO, duke of Vienna.

ANGELO, lord deputy in the duke's absence.

ESCALUS, an ancient lord, joined with Angelo in the deputation.

CLAUDIO, a young gentleman.

LUCIO, a fantastic.

TWO other like GENTLEMEN.

VARRIUS,* a gentleman, servant to the duke.

PROVOST.

THOMAS, } two friars.
PETER,

A JUSTICE.

ELBOW, a simple constable.

FROTH, a foolish gentleman.

CLOWN, servant to Mrs. OVER-DONE.

ABHORSON, an executioner.

BARNARDINE, a dissolute prisoner.

ISABELLA, sister to Claudio.

MARIANA, betrothed to Angelo.

JULIET, beloved by Claudio.

FRANCISCA, a nun.

MRS. OVER-DONE, a bawd.

Lords, Gentlemen, Guards, Officers, and other Attendants.

SCENE, Vienna.

* Varrius might be omitted, for he is only once spoken to,
and says nothing.

JOHNSON.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

A C T I.

SCENE I.

An apartment in the Duke's palace.

Enter DUKE, ESCALUS, Lords, and Attendants.

Duke. Escalus,—

Esc. My lord.

Duke. Of government the properties to unfold,
Would seem in me to affect speech and discourse ;
Since, I am put to know,¹ that your own science
Exceeds, in that, the lists ² of all advice
My strength can give you. Then no more remains,
But that to your sufficiency,³ as your worth is able,
And let them work. The nature of our people,
Our city's institutions, and the terms
For common justice, you are as pregnant ⁴ in,
As art and practice hath enriched any
That we remember. There is our commission,
From which we would not have you warp.—Call
hither,

¹ Since I am assured.

² Bounds, limits.

³ Skill in government.

⁴ Ready.

I say, bid come before us Angelo.—

[*Exit an Attendant.*

What figure of us think you he will bear ?
 For you must know, we have with special soul¹
 Elected him our absence to supply ;
 Lent him our terror, dress'd him with our love ;
 And given his deputation all the organs
 Of our own power. What think you of it ?

Esc. If any in Vienna be of worth
 To undergo such ample grace and honor,
 It is lord Angelo.

Enter ANGELO.

Duke. Look, where he comes.
Ang. Always obedient to your grace's will,
 I come to know your pleasure.

Duke. Angelo,
 There is a kind of character in thy life,
 That, to the observer, doth thy history
 Fully unfold. Thyself and thy belongings²
 Are not thine own so proper,³ as to waste
 Thyself upon thy virtues, them on thee.
 Heaven doth with us, as we with torches do ;
 Not light them for themselves : for if our virtues
 Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
 As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely
 touch'd,
 But to fine issues :⁴ nor nature never lends

¹ Immediate choice.

² Endowments.

³ So much thy own property.

⁴ For high purposes.

The smallest scruple of her excellence,
But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines
Herself the glory of a creditor,
Both thanks and use. But I do bend my speech
To one that can my part in him advertise ;¹
Hold therefore, Angelo ;
In our remove, be thou at full ourself ;
Mortality and mercy in Vienna
Live in thy tongue and heart. Old Escalus,
Though first in question,² is thy secondary :
Take thy commission.

Ang. Now, good my lord,
Let there be some more test made of my metal,
Before so noble and so great a figure
Be stamp'd upon it.

Duke. No more evasion :
We have with a leaven'd and prepared choice
Proceeded to you ; therefore take your honors.
Our haste from hence is of so quick condition,
That it prefers itself, and leaves unquestion'd
Matters of needful value. We shall write to you,
As time and our concernings shall importune,
How it goes with us ; and do look to know
What doth befall you here. So, fare you well :
To the hopeful execution do I leave you
Of your commissions.

Ang. Yet, give leave, my lord,

¹ Who is himself conversant in the nature and duties of
that office, which I have now delegated to him.

² First appointed.

That we may bring you something on the way.

Duke. My haste may not admit it ;
Nor need you, on mine honor, have to do
With any scruple : your scope ¹ is as mine own ;
So to enforce, or qualify the laws,
As to your soul seems good. Give me your hand :
I 'll privily away. I love the people,
But do not like ~~to~~ stage me to their eyes :
Though it do well, I do not relish well
Their loud applause, and *aves* ² vehement ;
Nor do I think the man of safe discretion,
That does affect it. Once more, fare you well.

Ang. The Heavens give safety to your purposes !

Esc. Lead forth, and bring you back in happiness !

Duke. I thank you. Fare you well. [Exit.

Esc. I shall desire you, sir, to give me leave
To have free speech with you ; and it concerns me
To look into the bottom of my place.
A power I have ; but of what strength and nature
I am not yet instructed.

Ang. 'Tis so with me.—Let us withdraw together,
And we may soon our satisfaction have
Touching that point.

Esc. I 'll wait upon your honor.

[Exit.

¹ Extent of power.

² Greetings.

SCENE II.

*A street.**Enter LUCIO and TWO GENTLEMEN.*

Lucio. If the duke, with the other dukes, come not to composition with the king of Hungary, why, then all the dukes fall upon the king.

1 *Gen.* Heaven grant us its peace, but not the king of Hungary's!

2 *Gen.* Amen.

Lucio. Thou concludest like the sanctimonious pirate, that went to sea with the ten commandments, but scraped one out of the table.

2 *Gen.* Thou shalt not steal?

Lucio. Ay, that he razed.

1 *Gen.* Why, 'twas a commandment to command the captain and all the rest from their functions; they put forth to steal. There's not a soldier of us all, that, in the thanksgiving before meat, doth relish the petition well that prays for peace.

2 *Gen.* I never heard any soldier dislike it.

Lucio. I believe thee; for, I think, thou never wast where grace was said.

2 *Gen.* No? a dozen times at least.

1 *Gen.* What? in metre?

Lucio. In any proportion,¹ or in any language.

1 *Gen.* I think, or in any religion.

¹ Measure.

Lucio. Ay! why not? Grace is grace, despite of all controversy. As for example; thou thyself art a wicked villain, despite of all grace.

1 *Gen.* Well, there went but a pair of sheers between us.¹

Lucio. I grant; as there may between the lists and the velvet. Thou art the list.

1 *Gen.* And thou the velvet: thou art good velvet; thou art a three-piled piece, I warrant thee: I had as lief be a list of an English kersey, as be piled, as thou art piled, for a French velvet. Do I speak feelingly now?

Lucio. I think thou dost; and, indeed, with most painful feeling of thy speech: I will, out of thine own confession, learn to begin thy health; but, whilst I live, forget to drink after thee.

1 *Gen.* I think, I have done myself wrong; have I not?

2 *Gen.* Yes, that thou hast; whether thou art tainted or free.

1 *Gen.* Behold, behold, where madam Mitigation comes! I have purchased as many diseases under her roof, as come to—

2 *Gen.* To what, I pray?

1 *Gen.* Judge.

2 *Gen.* To three thousand dollars a year.

1 *Gen.* Ay, and more.

Lucio. A French crown more.

¹ We are both of the same piece.

1 *Gen.* Thou art always figuring diseases in me :
but thou art full of error ; I am sound.

Lucio. Nay, not as one would say, healthy ; but
so sound, as things that are hollow : thy bones are
hollow ; impiety has made a feast of thee.

Enter BAWD.

1 *Gen.* How now ? Which of your hips has the
most profound sciatica ?

Bawd. Well, well ; there's one yonder arrested,
and carried to prison, was worth five thousand of
you all.

1 *Gen.* Who 's that, I pray thee ?

Bawd. Marry, sir, that 's Claudio, signior Claudio.

1 *Gen.* Claudio to prison ? 'tis not so.

Bawd. Nay, but I know, 'tis so : I saw him ar-
rested ; saw him carried away ; and, which is more,
within these three days his head 's to be chopped off.

Lucio. But, after all this fooling, I would not
have it so. Art thou sure of this ?

Bawd. I am too sure of it : and it is for getting
madam Julietta with child.

Lucio. Believe me, this may be : he promised to
meet me two hours since ; and he was ever precise
in promise-keeping.

2 *Gen.* Besides, you know, it draws something
near to the speech we had to such a purpose.

1 *Gen.* But most of all, agreeing with the pro-
clamation.

Lucio. Away ; let 's go learn the truth of it.

[*Exeunt Lucio and Gentlemen.*

Bawd. Thus, what with the war, what with the sweat,¹ what with the gallows, and what with poverty, I am custom-shrunk. How now? what's the news with you?

Enter clown.

Clown. Yonder man is carried to prison.

Bawd. Well; what has he done?

Clown. A woman.

Bawd. But what's his offence?

Clown. Groping for trouts in a peculiar river.

Bawd. What, is there a maid with child by him?

Clown. No; but there's a woman with maid by him. You have not heard of the proclamation, have you?

Bawd. What proclamation, man?

Clown. All houses in the suburbs of Vienna must be plucked down.

Bawd. And what shall become of those in the city?

Clown. They shall stand for seed: they had gone down too, but that a wise burgher put in for them.

Bawd. But shall all our houses of resort in the suburbs be pulled down?

Clown. To the ground, mistress.

Bawd. Why, here's a change, indeed, in the commonwealth! What shall become of me?

Clown. Come; fear not you: good counsellors

¹ Sweating sickness.

lack no clients : though you change your place, you need not change your trade ; I 'll be your tapster still. Courage ; there will be pity taken on you : you that have worn your eyes almost out in the service, you will be considered.

Bawd. What 's to do here, Thomas Tapster ?
Let 's withdraw.

Clown. Here comes signior Claudio, led by the provost to prison : and there 's madam Juliet.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The same.

*Enter PROVOST, CLAUDIO, JULIET, and Officers ;
LUCIO, and TWO GENTLEMEN.*

Clau. Fellow, why dost thou show me thus to the world ?

Bear me to prison, where I am committed.

Pro. I do it not in evil disposition,
But from lord Angelo by special charge.

Clau. Thus can the demi-god, Authority,
Make us pay down for our offence by weight.—
The words of Heaven ;—on whom it will, it will ;
On whom it will not, so ; yet still 'tis just.

Lucio. Why, how now, Claudio ? whence comes this restraint ?

Clau. From too much liberty, my Lucio, liberty :
As surfeit is the father of much fast,

So every scope¹ by the immoderate use,
 Turns to restraint. Our natures do pursue
 (Like rats that ravin² down their proper bane)
 A thirsty evil; and when we drink, we die.

Lucio. If I could speak so wisely under an arrest,
 I would send for certain of my creditors: and yet,
 to say the truth, I had as lief have the poppery of
 freedom as the morality of imprisonment. What's
 thy offence, Claudio?

Clau. What, but to speak of would offend again.

Lucio. What is it? murder?

Clau. No.

Lucio. Lechery?

Clau. Call it so.

Pro. Away, sir; you must go.

Clau. One word, good friend.—Lucio, a word
 with you. [takes him aside.]

Lucio. A hundred, if they'll do you any good.—
 Is lechery so look'd after?

Clau. Thus stands it with me:—Upon a true
 contract,

I got possession of Julietta's bed;
 You know the lady: she is fast my wife,
 Save that we do the denunciation lack
 Of outward order: this we came not to,
 Only for propagation³ of a dower
 Remaining in the coffer of her friends;

¹ Act of riot.

² Voraciously devour

³ Payment.

From whom we thought it meet to hide our love,
Till time had made them for us. But it chances,
The stealth of our most mutual entertainment,
With character too gross, is writ on Juliet.

Lucio. With child, perhaps?

Clau. Unhappily, even so.

And the new deputy now for the duke,—
Whether it be the fault and glimpse of newness;¹
Or whether that the body public be
A horse whereon the governor doth ride,
Who, newly in the seat, that it may know
He can command, lets it straight feel the spur:
Whether the tyranny be in his place,
Or in his eminence that fills it up,
I stagger in:—but this new governor
Awakes me all the enrolled penalties,
Which have, like unscour'd armor, hung by the wall
So long, that nineteen zodiacs have gone round,
And none of them been worn; and, for a name,
Now puts the drowsy and neglected act
Freshly on me:—'tis, surely, for a name.

Lucio. I warrant, it is: and thy head stands so
tickle² on thy shoulders, that a milk-maid, if she be
in love, may sigh it off. Send after the duke, and
appeal to him.

Clau. I have done so, but he's not to be found.
I pr'ythee, Lucio, do me this kind service:

¹ 'Whether it be the fault of newness, arising from the mind being dazzled by a novel authority, of which the new governor has yet had only a glimpse.'—Malone. ² Ticklish.

This day my sister should the cloister enter,
 And there receive her approbation :¹
 Acquaint her with the danger of my state ;
 Implore her, in my voice, that she make friends
 To the strict deputy ; bid herself assay him ;
 I have great hope in that : for in her youth
 There is a prone² and speechless dialect,
 Such as moves men ; beside, she hath prosperous art
 When she will play with reason and discourse,
 And well she can persuade.

Lucio. I pray, she may : as well for the encouragement of the like, which else would stand under grievous imposition ;³ as for the enjoying of thy life, who I would be sorry should be thus foolishly lost at a game of tick-tack. I'll to her.

Clau. I thank you, good friend Lucio.

Lucio. Within two hours,—

Clau. Come, officer, away.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A monastery.

Enter DUKE and FRIAR THOMAS.

Duke. No, holy father ; throw away that thought ;
 Believe not that the dribbling⁴ dart of love
 Can pierce a complete bosom :⁵ why I desire thee

¹ Enter on her probation or noviciate. ² Prompt.

³ Penalties imposed. ⁴ Fluttering without force.

⁵ A breast completely armed.

To give me secret harbor, hath a purpose
More grave and wrinkled than the aims and ends
Of burning youth.

Friar. May your grace speak of it?

Duke. My holy sir, none better knows than you
How I have ever loved the life removed;¹
And held in idle price to haunt assemblies,
Where youth, and cost, and witless bravery keeps.²
I have deliver'd to lord Angelo
(A man of stricture,³ and firm abstinence)
My absolute power and place here in Vienna,
And he supposes me travell'd to Poland;
For so I have strew'd it in the common ear,
And so it is received. Now, pious sir,
You will demand of me, why I do this?

Friar. Gladly, my lord.

Duke. We have strict statutes, and most biting
laws,

(The needful bits and curbs for headstrong steeds)
Which for these fourteen years we have let sleep;
Even like an o'er-grown lion in a cave,
That goes not out to prey. Now, as fond fathers
Having bound up the threatening twigs of birch,
Only to stick it in their children's sight,
For terror, not to use; in time the rod
Becomes more mock'd than fear'd; so our decrees,
Dead to infliction, to themselves are dead;
And liberty plucks justice by the nose;

¹ A life of retirement.

² Showy dress resides.

³ Strictness.

The baby beats the nurse, and quite athwart
Goes all decorum.

Friar. It rested in your grace
To unloose this tied-up justice, when you pleased :
And it in you more dreadful would have seem'd
Than in lord Angelo.

Duke. I do fear, too dreadful :
Sith ¹ 'twas my fault to give the people scope,
'Twould be my tyranny to strike, and gall them,
For what I bid them do : for we bid this be done,
When evil deeds have their permissive pass,
And not the punishment. Therefore, indeed, my
father,

I have on Angelo imposed the office ;
Who may, in the ambush of my name, strike home,
And yet my nature never in the sight,
To do it slander. And to behold his sway,
I will, as 'twere a brother of your order,
Visit both prince and people : therefore, I pr'ythee,
Supply me with the habit, and instruct me
How I may formally in person bear me
Like a true friar. More reasons for this action,
At our more leisure shall I render you ;
Only, this one :—Lord Angelo is precise ;
Stands at a guard ² with envy ; scarce confesses
That his blood flows, or that his appetite
Is more to bread than stone. Hence shall we see,
If power change purpose, what our seemers be.

[*Exeunt.*

¹ Since.

² On his defence.

SCENE V.

*A nunnery.**Enter ISABELLA and FRANCISCA.**Isa.* And have you nuns no farther privileges ?*Fran.* Are not these large enough ?*Isa.* Yes, truly : I speak not as desiring more ;
But rather wishing a more strict restraint
Upon the sisterhood, the votarists of saint Clare.*Lucio.* Ho ! Peace be in this place ! [within.]*Isa.* Who's that which calls ?*Fran.* It is a man's voice. Gentle Isabella,
Turn you the key, and know his business of him :
You may, I may not ; you are yet unsworn :
When you have vow'd, you must not speak with
men,
But in the presence of the prioress :
Then, if you speak, you must not show your face ;
Or, if you show your face, you must not speak.
He calls again : I pray you, answer him.

[Exit Francisca.]

Isa. Peace and prosperity ! Who is 't that calls ?*Enter LUCIO.**Lucio.* Hail, virgin, if you be ; as those cheek-
rosesProclaim you are no less ! Can you so stead me,
As bring me to the sight of Isabella,
A novice of this place, and the fair sister

To her unhappy brother Claudio?

Isa. Why her unhappy brother? let me ask;
The rather, for I now must make you know
I am that Isabella, and his sister.

Lucio. Gentle and fair, your brother kindly greets
you:

Not to be weary with you, he's in prison.

Isa. Woe me! For what?

Lucio. For that, which, if myself might be his
judge,

He should receive his punishment in thanks:

He hath got his friend with child.

Isa. Sir, mock me not:—your story.

Lucio. 'Tis true. I would not.¹ Though 'tis my
familiar sin

With maids to seem the lapwing, and to jest,
Tongue far from heart,—play with all virgins so:
I hold you as a thing ensky'd, and sainted;
By your renouncement, an immortal spirit;
And to be talk'd with in sincerity,
As with a saint.

Isa. You do blaspheme the good, in mocking me.

Lucio. Do not believe it. Fewness and truth,²
'tis thus:

Your brother and his lover have embraced:
As those that feed grow full; as blossoming time,
That from the seedness the bare fallow brings
To teeming foison;³ even so her plenteous womb

¹ I would not mock you.

² In few and true words.

³ Abundant produce.

Expresseth his full tilth and husbandry.

Isa. Some one with child by him?—My cousin Juliet?

Lucio. Is she your cousin?

Isa. Adoptedly; as school-maids change their names,

By vain though apt affection.

Lucio. She it is.

Isa. O, let him marry her!

Lucio. This is the point.
The duke is very strangely gone from hence;
Bore many gentlemen, myself being one,
In hand,¹ and hope of action: but we do learn
By those that know the very nerves of state,
His givings out were of an infinite distance
From his true-meant design. Upon his place,
And with full line² of his authority,
Governs lord Angelo; a man, whose blood
Is very snow-broth; one who never feels
The wanton stings and motions of the sense;
But doth rebate³ and blunt his natural edge
With profits of the mind, study and fast.
He (to give fear to use and liberty,
Which have, for long, run by the hideous law,
As mice by lions) hath pick'd out an act,
Under whose heavy sense your brother's life
Falls into forfeit: he arrests him on it;

¹ Kept many gentlemen in expectation.

² Extent.

³ Repress.

And follows close the rigor of the statute,
To make him an example : all hope is gone,
Unless you have the grace¹ by your fair prayer
To soften Angelo : and that 's my pith
Of business 'twixt you and your poor brother.

Isa. Doth he so seek his life ?

Lucio. Has censured² him
Already ; and, as I hear, the provost hath
A warrant for his execution.

Isa. Alas ! what poor ability 's in me
To do him good ?

Lucio. Assay the power you have.

Isa. My power ! Alas ! I doubt,—

Lucio. Our doubts are traitors,
And make us lose the good we oft might win,
By fearing to attempt. Go to lord Angelo,
And let him learn to know, when maidens sue,
Men give like gods ; but when they weep and kneel,
All their petitions are as freely theirs
As they themselves would owe³ them.

Isa. I 'll see what I can do.

Lucio. But, speedily.

Isa. I will about it straight ;
No longer staying but to give the mother⁴
Notice of my affair. I humbly thank you :
Commend me to my brother : soon at night
I 'll send him certain word of my success.

¹ Power of gaining favor.

³ Possess.

² Sentenced.

⁴ The abbess or prioress.

Lucio. I take my leave of you.

Isa. Good sir, adieu.

[*Exeunt.*]

A C T I I.

SCENE I.

A hall in Angelo's house.

Enter ANGELO, ESCALUS, A JUSTICE, PROVOST, Officers, and other Attendants.

Ang. We must not make a scare-crow of the law,
Setting it up to fear¹ the birds of prey,
And let it keep one shape, till custom make it
Their perch, and not their terror.

Esc. Ay, but yet
Let us be keen, and rather cut a little,
Than fall, and bruise to death. Alas ! this gentleman,
Whom I would save, had a most noble father.
Let but your honor know,²
(Whom I believe to be most strait in virtue)
That, in the working of your own affections,
Had time cohered with place, or place with wishing,
Or that the resolute acting of your blood
Could have attain'd the effect of your own purpose,
Whether you had not sometime in your life
Err'd in this point which now you censure him,

¹ Terrify.

² Examine.

And pull'd the law upon you.

Ang. 'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,
Another thing to fall. I not deny,
The jury, passing on the prisoner's life,
May, in the sworn twelve, have a thief or two
Guiltier than him they try. What's open made to
justice,

That justice seizes. What know the laws,
That thieves do pass on thieves? 'Tis very pregnant,¹
The jewel that we find, we stoop and take it,
Because we see it; but what we do not see,
We tread upon, and never think of it.

You may not so extenuate his offence,
For² I have had such faults; but rather tell me,
When I, that censure³ him, do so offend,
Let mine own judgment pattern out my death,
And nothing come in partial. Sir, he must die.

Esc. Be it as your wisdom will.

Ang. Where is the provost?

Pro. Here, if it like your honor.

Ang. See that Claudio
Be executed by nine to-morrow morning:
Bring him his confessor; let him be prepared;
For that's the utmost of his pilgrimage.

[*Exit Provost.*

Esc. Well, Heaven forgive him, and forgive
us all!

Some rise by sin, and some by virtue fall:

¹ Plain.

² Because.

³ Sentence.

Some run from brakes¹ of vice, and answer none;
And some condemned for a fault alone.

Enter ELBOW, FROTH, CLOWN, Officers, &c.

Elbow. Come, bring them away: if these be good people in a commonweal, that do nothing but use their abuses in common houses, I know no law: bring them away.

Ang. How now, sir! What's your name? and what's the matter?

Elbow. If it please your honor, I am the poor duke's constable, and my name is Elbow: I do lean upon justice, sir, and do bring in here before your good honor two notorious benefactors.

Ang. Benefactors? Well; what benefactors are they? are they not malefactors?

Elbow. If it please your honor, I know not well what they are: but precise villains they are, that I am sure of; and void of all profanation in the world, that good Christians ought to have.

Esc. This comes off well;² here's a wise officer.
Ang. Go to. What quality are they of? Elbow is your name? Why dost thou not speak, Elbow?

Clown. He cannot, sir; he's out at elbow.

Ang. What are you, sir?

Elbow. He, sir? a tapster, sir; parcel³ bawd; one that serves a bad woman; whose house, sir,

¹ Thickets, thorny paths.

² This is well told.

³ Partly.

was, as they say, plucked down in the suburbs; and now she professes a hot-house,¹ which, I think, is a very ill house too.

Esc. How know you that?

Elbow. My wife, sir, whom I detest² before Heaven and your honor,—

Esc. How! thy wife?

Elbow. Ay, sir; whom, I thank Heaven, is an honest woman;—

Esc. Dost thou detest her therefore?

Elbow. I say, sir, I will detest myself also, as well as she, that this house, if it be not a bawd's house, it is pity of her life, for it is a naughty house.

Esc. How dost thou know that, constable?

Elbow. Marry, sir, by my wife; who, if she had been a woman cardinally given, might have been accused in fornication, adultery, and all uncleanliness there.

Esc. By the woman's means?

Elbow. Ay, sir, by mistress Over-done's means: but as she spit in his face, so she defied him.

Clown. Sir, if it please your honor, this is not so.

Elbow. Prove it before these varlets here, thou honorable man, prove it.

Esc. Do you hear how he misplaces? [to Angelo.

Clown. Sir, she came in great with child; and longing (saving your honor's reverence) for stewed

¹ Keeps a bagnio.

² Protest.

prunes; sir, we had but two in the house, which at that very distant time stood, as it were, in a fruit-dish, a dish of some threepence; your honors have seen such dishes: they are not China dishes, but very good dishes.

Esc. Go to, go to; no matter for the dish, sir.

Clown. No, indeed, sir, not of a pin; you are therein in the right: but to the point. As I say, this mistress Elbow, being, as I say, with child, and being great bellied, and longing, as I said, for prunes; and having but two in the dish, as I said, master Froth here, this very man, having eaten the rest, as I said, and, as I say, paying for them very honestly;—for, as you know, master Froth, I could not give you threepence again.

Froth. No, indeed.

Clown. Very well: you being then, if you be remembered, cracking the stones of the foresaid prunes.

Froth. Ay, so I did, indeed.

Clown. Why, very well: I telling you then, if you be remembered, that such a one, and such a one, were past cure of the thing you wot of, unless they kept very good diet, as I told you.

Froth. All this is true.

Clown. Why, very well then.

Esc. Come, you are a tedious fool: to the purpose.—What was done to Elbow's wife, that he hath cause to complain of? Come me to what was done to her.

Clown. Sir, your honor cannot come to that yet.

Esc. No, sir, nor I mean it-not.

Clown. Sir, but you shall come to it, by your honor's leave : and, I beseech you, look into master Froth here, sir ; a man of fourscore pound a year ; whose father died at Hallowmas.¹—Was 't not at Hallowmas, master Froth ?

Froth. All-hallownd eve.²

Clown. Why, very well ; I hope here be truths. He, sir, sitting, as I say, in a lower³ chair, sir ;—'twas in the Bunch of Grapes, where, indeed, you have a delight to sit. Have you not ?

Froth. I have so ; because it is an open room, and good for winter.

Clown. Why, very well then ;—I hope here be truths.

Ang. This will last out a night in Russia, When nights are longest there. I 'll take my leave, And leave you to the hearing of the cause ; Hoping, you 'll find good cause to whip them all.

Esc. I think no less. Good morrow to your lordship. [Exit Angelo.] Now, sir, come on. What was done to Elbow's wife, once more ?

Clown. Once, sir ? there was nothing done to her once.

Elbow. I beseech you, sir, ask him what this man did to my wife.

Clown. I beseech your honor, ask me.

¹ All Souls day.

² Eve of All Saints day.

³ Easy.

Esc. Well, sir ; what did this gentleman to her ?

Clown. I beseech you, sir, look in this gentleman's face.—Good master Froth, look upon his honor ; 'tis for a good purpose. Doth your honor mark his face ?

Esc. Ay, sir, very well.

Clown. Nay, I beseech you, mark it well.

Esc. Well, I do so.

Clown. Doth your honor see any harm in his face ?

Esc. Why, no.

Clown. I 'll be supposed¹ upon a book, his face is the worst thing about him. Good then ; if his face be the worst thing about him, how could master Froth do the constable's wife any harm ? I would know that of your honor.

Esc. He 's in the right. Constable, what say you to it ?

Elbow. First, an it like you, the house is a respected house ; next, this is a respected fellow ; and his mistress is a respected woman.

Clown. By this hand, sir, his wife is a more respected person than any of us all.

Elbow. Varlet, thou liest ; thou liest, wicked varlet : the time is yet to come, that she was ever respected with man, woman, or child.

Clown. Sir, she was respected with him before he married with her.

¹ Deposed, sworn.

Esc. Which is the wiser here, Justice or Iniquity?¹ Is this true?

Elbow. O thou caitiff! O thou varlet! O thou wicked Hannibal!² I respected with her, before I was married to her? If ever I was respected with her, or she with me, let not your worship think me the poor duke's officer.—Prove this, thou wicked Hannibal, or I'll have mine action of battery on thee.

Esc. If he took you a box o' th' ear, you might have your action of slander too.

Elbow. Marry, I thank your good worship for it. What is 't your worship's pleasure I should do with this wicked caitiff?

Esc. Truly, officer, because he hath some offences in him, that thou wouldest discover if thou couldst, let him continue in his courses, till thou know'st what they are.

Elbow. Marry, I thank your worship for it.—Thou seest, thou wicked varlet, now, what's come upon thee; thou art to continue now, thou varlet; thou art to continue.

Esc. Where were you born, friend? [to *Froth*.

Froth. Here in Vienna, sir.

Esc. Are you of fourscore pounds a year?

Froth. Yes, an 't please you, sir.

Esc. So.—What trade are you of, sir?

[to the *Clown*.]

¹ The constable or the clown?

² For cannibal.

Clown. A tapster; a poor widow's tapster.

Esc. Your mistress's name?

Clown. Mistress Over-done.

Esc. Hath she had any more than one husband?

Clown. Nine, sir; Over-done by the last.

Esc. Nine!—Come hither to me, master Froth. Master Froth, I would not have you acquainted with tapsters; they will draw¹ you, master Froth, and you will hang them. Get you gone, and let me hear no more of you.

Froth. I thank your worship. For mine own part, I never come into any room in a taphouse, but I am drawn in.

Esc. Well; no more of it, master Froth: farewell. [*Exit Froth.*]—Come you hither to me, master tapster: what's your name, master tapster?

Clown. Pompey.

Esc. What else?

Clown. Bum, sir.

Esc. Troth, and your bum is the greatest thing about you; so that, in the beastliest sense, you are Pompey the great. Pompey, you are partly a bawd, Pompey, howsoever you color it in being a tapster. Are you not? come, tell me true, it shall be the better for you.

Clown. Truly, sir, I am a poor fellow, that would live.

Esc. How would you live, Pompey? by being a

¹ Drain.

bawd? What do you think of the trade, Pompey? is it a lawful trade?

Clown. If the law would allow it, sir.

Esc. But the law will not allow it, Pompey; nor it shall not be allowed in Vienna.

Clown. Does your worship mean to geld and spay all the youth in the city?

Esc. No, Pompey.

Clown. Truly, sir, in my poor opinion, they will to 't then. If your worship will take order¹ for the drabs and the knaves, you need not to fear the bawds.

Esc. There are pretty orders beginning, I can tell you: it is but heading and hanging.

Clown. If you head and hang all that offend that way but for ten year together, you 'll be glad to give out a commission for more heads. If this law hold in Vienna ten year, I 'll rent the fairest house in it, after threepence a bay.² If you live to see this come to pass, say, Pompey told you so.

Esc. Thank you, good Pompey: and, in requital of your prophecy, hark you,—I advise you, let me not find you before me again upon any complaint whatsoever, no, not for dwelling where you do: if I do, Pompey, I shall beat you to your tent, and prove a shrewd Cæsar to you; in plain dealing, Pompey, I

¹ Measures.

² A bay of building is the space between the main beams of a roof.

shall have you whipped: so for this time, Pompey, fare you well.

Clown. I thank your worship for your good counsel; but I shall follow it, as the flesh and fortune shall better determine.

Whip me? No, no; let carman whip his jade; The valiant heart's not whipp'd out of his trade.

[*Exit.*]

Esc. Come hither to me, master Elbow; come hither, master constable. How long have you been in this place of constable?

Elbow. Seven year and a half, sir.

Esc. I thought, by your readiness in the office, you had continued in it some time. You say, seven years together?

Elbow. And a half, sir.

Esc. Alas! it hath been great pains to you! They do you wrong to put you so oft upon't. Are there not men in your ward sufficient to serve it?

Elbow. Faith, sir, few of any wit in such matters: as they are chosen, they are glad to choose me for them; I do it for some piece of money, and go through with all.

Esc. Look you, bring me in the names of some six or seven, the most sufficient of your parish.

Elbow. To your worship's house, sir?

Esc. To my house. Fare you well. [*Exit Elbow.*] What's o'clock, think you?

Jus. Eleven, sir.

Esc. I pray you, home to dinner with me.

Jus. I humbly thank you.

Esc. It grieves me for the death of Claudio ;
But there's no remedy.

Jus. Lord Angelo is severe.

Esc. It is but needful :
Mercy is not itself, that oft looks so ;
Pardon is still the nurse of second woe :
But yet,—poor Claudio !—There's no remedy.
Come, sir. [Exit.]

SCENE II.

Another room in the same.

Enter PROVOST and SERVANT.

Ser. He's hearing of a cause ; he will come
straight.

I'll tell him of you.

Pro. Pray you, do. [Exit Servant.] I'll know
His pleasure ; may be, he will relent. Alas,
He hath but as offended in a dream !
All sects, all ages smack of this vice ; and he
To die for it !

Enter ANGELO.

Ang. Now, what's the matter, provost ?

Pro. Is it your will Claudio shall die to-morrow ?

Ang. Did I not tell thee, yea ? hadst thou not
order ?

Why dost thou ask again ?

Pro. Lest I might be too rash :
Under your good correction, I have seen,
When, after execution, judgment hath

Repented o'er his doom.

Ang. Go to ; let that be mine :
Do you your office, or give up your place,
And you shall well be spared.

Pro. I crave your honor's pardon.—
What shall be done, sir, with the groaning Juliet ?
She 's very near her hour.

Ang. Dispose of her
To some more fitter place ; and that with speed.

Re-enter SERVANT.

Ser. Here is the sister of the man condemn'd,
Desires access to you.

Ang. Hath he a sister ?
Pro. Ay, my good lord ; a very virtuous maid,
And to be shortly of a sisterhood,
If not already.

Ang. Well, let her be admitted.

[*Exit Servant.*

See you, the fornicatress be removed ;
Let her have needful, but not lavish means ;
There shall be order for it.

Enter LUCIO and ISABELLA.

Pro. Save your honor ! [offering to retire.
Ang. Stay a little while.—[to Isabella.] You are
welcome. What 's your will ?
Isa. I am a woful suitor to your honor,
Please but your honor hear me.
Ang. Well ; what 's your suit ?

Isa. There is a vice, that most I do abhor,
And most desire should meet the blow of justice ;
For which I would not plead, but that I must ;
For which I must not plead, but that I am
At war, 'twixt will, and will not.

Ang.

Well ; the matter ?

Isa. I have a brother is condemn'd to die :
I do beseech you, let it be his fault,
And not my brother.

Pro.

Heaven give thee moving graces !

Ang. Condemn the fault, and not the actor of it ?
Why, every fault's condemn'd, ere it be done :
Mine were the very cipher of a function,
To fine the faults,¹ whose fine stands in record,
And let go by the actor.

Isa. O just, but severe law !
I had a brother then.—Heaven keep your honor !

[retiring.]

Lucio. [to *Isa.*] Give 't not o'er so : to him again,
entreat him ;
Kneel down before him, hang upon his gown :
You are too cold : if you should need a pin,
You could not with more tame a tongue desire it :
To him, I say.

Isa. Must he needs die ?

Ang.

Maiden, no remedy.

Isa. Yes ; I do think that you might pardon him,
And neither Heaven nor man grieve at the mercy.

¹ To pronounce the fine or sentence of the law, appointed for certain crimes.

Ang. I will not do 't.

Isa. But can you, if you would?

Ang. Look, what I will not, that I cannot do.

Isa. But might you do 't, and do the world no wrong,

If so your heart were touch'd with that remorse¹
As mine is to him?

Ang. He's sentenced; 'tis too late.

Lucio. You are too cold. [to Isabella.]

Isa. Too late? why, no; I, that do speak a word,

May call it back again. Well, believe this:²
No ceremony that to great ones 'longs,
Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword,
The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe,
Become them with one half so good a grace
As mercy does. If he had been as you, and you
as he,

You would have slipp'd like him; but he, like you,
Would not have been so stern.

Ang. Pray you, begone.

Isa. I would to Heaven I had your potency,
And you were Isabel! should it then be thus?
No; I would tell what 'twere to be a judge,
And what a prisoner.

Lucio. Ay, touch him: there's the vein. [aside.]

Ang. Your brother is a forfeit of the law,
And you but waste your words.

¹ Pity.

² Be assured of this.

Isa.

Alas ! alas !

Why, all the souls that were, were forfeit once ;
And He that might the vantage best have took,
Found out the remedy. How would you be,
If he, which is the top of judgment, should
But judge you as you are ? O, think on that ;
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new made.¹

Ang. Be you content, fair maid ;
It is the law, not I, condemns your brother :
Were he my kinsman, brother, or my son,
It should be thus with him ;—he must die to-
morrow.

Isa. To-morrow ? O, that's sudden ! Spare him,
spare him :
He's not prepared for death ! Even for our kitchens
We kill the fowl of season ;² shall we serve Heaven
With less respect than we do minister
To our gross selves ? Good, good my lord, bethink
you :
Who is it that hath died for this offence ?
There's many have committed it.

Lucio.

Ay, well said.

Ang. The law hath not been dead, though it hath
slept :

Those many had not dared to do that evil,
If the first man that did the edict infringe,
Had answer'd for his deed : now, 'tis awake ;

¹ As man regenerate.

² When it is in season.

Takes note of what is done ; and, like a prophet,
Looks in a glass, that shows what future evils
(Either now, or by remissness new-conceived,
And so in progress to be hatch'd and born)
Are now to have no successive degrees,
But, where they live, to end.

Isa. Yet show some pity.

Ang. I show it most of all, when I show justice ;
For then I pity those I do not know,
Which a dismiss'd offence would after gall ;
And do him right, that, answering one foul wrong,
Lives not to act another. Be satisfied ;
Your brother dies to-morrow : be content.

Isa. So you must be the first, that gives this sentence ;
And he, that suffers ! O, it is excellent
To have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant.

Lucio. That's well said.

Isa. Could great men thunder
As Jove himself does, Jove would ne'er be quiet,
For every pelting,¹ petty officer,
Would use his heaven for thunder ; nothing but
thunder.—

Merciful Heaven !
Thou rather, with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt,
Split'st the unwedgeable and gnarled ² oak
Than the soft myrtle ; but man, proud man !

¹ Paltry.

² Knotted.

Dress'd in a little brief authority ;
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
His glassy essence,—like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,
As make the angels weep ; who, with our spleens,
Would all themselves laugh mortal.

Lucio. O, to him, to him, wench : he will relent ;
He's coming ; I perceive 't.

Pro. Pray Heaven, she win him !

Isa. We cannot weigh our brother with ourself :
Great men may jest with saints : 'tis wit in them ;
But, in the less, foul profanation.

Lucio. Thou'rt in the right, girl ; more o' that.

Isa. That in the captain's but a choleric word,
Which in the soldier is flat blasphemy.

Lucio. Art advised o' that ? more on 't.

Ang. Why do you put these sayings upon me ?

Isa. Because authority, though it err like others,
Hath yet a kind of medicine in itself,
That skins the vice o' the top. Go to your bosom ;
Knock there ; and ask your heart, what it doth know
That's like my brother's fault : if it confess
A natural guiltiness, such as is his,
Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue
Against my brother's life.

Ang. She speaks, and 'tis
Such sense, that my sense breeds with it.¹—Fare
you well.

¹ She delivers her sentiments with such eloquence, that my sensual desires are inflamed even by what she says.

Isa. Gentle my lord, turn back.

Ang. I will bethink me.—Come again to-morrow.

Isa. Hark, how I'll bribe you. Good my lord,
turn back.

Ang. How! bribe me?

Isa. Ay, with such gifts, that Heaven shall share
with you.

Lucio. You had marr'd all else.

Isa. Not with fond shekels of the tested¹ gold,
Or stones, whose rates are either rich, or poor,
As fancy values them: but with true prayers,
That shall be up at heaven, and enter there,
Ere sun-rise; prayers from preserved souls,²
From fasting maids, whose minds are dedicate
To nothing temporal.

Ang. Well: come to me
To-morrow.

Lucio. Go to; it is well; away. [*aside to Isabel.*]

Isa. Heaven keep your honor safe!

Ang. Amen:
For I am that way going to temptation, [*aside.*]
Where prayers cross.

Isa. At what hour to-morrow
Shall I attend your lordship?

Ang. At any time 'fore noon.

Isa. Save your honor!

[*Exeunt Lucio, Isabella, and Provost.*]

¹ Attested, stamped.

² Preserved from the corruption of the world.

Ang. From thee ; even from thy virtue !—
What's this ? what's this ? Is this her fault, or
mine ?

The tempter, or the tempted, who sins most ? Ha !
Not she ; nor doth she tempt : but it is I,
That lying by the violet, in the sun,
Do, as the carrion does, not as the flower,
Corrupt with virtuous season.¹ Can it be,
That modesty may more betray our sense
Than woman's lightness ? Having waste ground
enough,

Shall we desire to raze the sanctuary,
And pitch our evils there ? O, fie, fie, fie !
What dost thou ? or what art thou, Angelo ?
Dost thou desire her foully, for those things
That make her good ? O, let her brother live :
Thieves for their robbery have authority,
When judges steal themselves. What ? do I love
her,

That I desire to hear her speak again,
And feast upon her eyes ? What is 't I dream on ?

{ O cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint,
With saints dost bait thy hook ! Most dangerous
Is that temptation, that doth goad us on
To sin in loving virtue : never could the strumpet,
With all her double vigor, art, and nature,
Once stir my temper ; but this virtuous maid

¹ I am like the carrion, which grows putrid by those beams
which increase the fragrance of the violet.

Subdues me quite.—Ever, till now,
When men were fond, I smiled, and wonder'd how.
[Exit.]

SCENE III.

A room in a prison.

Enter DUKE, habited like a Friar, and PROVOST.

Duke. Hail to you, provost! so, I think, you are.
Pro. I am the provost. What's your will, good friar?

Duke. Bound by my charity, and my bless'd order,
I come to visit the afflicted spirits
Here in the prison: do me the common right
To let me see them; and to make me know
The nature of their crimes, that I may minister
To them accordingly.

Pro. I would do more than that, if more were needful.

Enter JULIET.

Look, here comes one; a gentlewoman of mine,
Who falling in the flames of her own youth,
Hath blister'd her report. She is with child;
And he that got it sentenced: a young man
More fit to do another such offence,
Than die for this.

Duke. When must he die?

Pro. As I do think, to-morrow.—
I have provided for you; stay awhile, [to Juliet.
And you shall be conducted.

Duke. Repent you, fair one, of the sin you carry ?

Jul. I do ; and bear the shame most patiently.

Duke. I 'll teach you how you shall arraign your conscience,

And try your penitence, if it be sound,
Or hollowly put on.

Jul. I 'll gladly learn.

Duke. Love you the man that wrong'd you ?

Jul. Yes, as I love the woman that wrong'd him.

Duke. So then, it seems, your most offenceful act
Was mutually committed ?

Jul. Mutually.

Duke. Then was your sin of heavier kind than his.

Jul. I do confess it, and repent it, father.

Duke. 'Tis meet so, daughter. But lest you do
repent,

As that the sin hath brought you to this shame,—
Which sorrow is always toward ourselves, not
Heaven;

Showing, we 'd not spare Heaven,¹ as we love it,
But as we stand in fear,—

Jul. I do repent me, as it is an evil;
And take the shame with joy.

Duke. There rest.²
Your partner, as I hear, must die to-morrow,
And I am going with instruction to him.—
Grace go with you ! *Benedicite!* [Exit.

¹ Spare to offend Heaven.

² Keep yourself in this temper.

Jul. Must die to-morrow ! O, injurious love,
That respites me a life, whose very comfort
Is still a dying horror !

Pro. 'Tis pity of him. [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV.

A room in Angelo's house.

Enter ANGELO.

Ang. When I would pray and think, I think and
pray
To several subjects : Heaven hath my empty words ;
Whilst my invention,¹ hearing not my tongue,
Anchors on Isabel : Heaven in my mouth,
As if I did but only chew his name ;
And in my heart, the strong and swelling evil
Of my conception. The state, whereon I studied,
Is, like a good thing, being often read,
Grown fear'd and tedious ; yea, my gravity,
Wherein (let no man hear me) I take pride,
Could I, with boot,² change for an idle plume,
Which the air beats for vain. O place ! O form !
How often dost thou with thy case,³ thy habit,
Wrench awe from fools, and tie the wiser souls
To thy false seeming ! Blood, thou still art blood :
Let's write good angel on the devil's horn,
'Tis not the devil's crest.

¹ Imagination.

² Profit.

³ Outside.

Enter servant.

How now, who 's there ?

Ser. One Isabel, a sister,
Desires access to you.

Ang. Teach her the way. [*Exit Servant.*] O
heavens !

Why does my blood thus muster to my heart ;
Making both it unable for itself,
And dispossessing all my other parts
Of necessary fitness ?

So play the foolish throngs with one that swoons ;
Come all to help him, and so stop the air
By which he should revive : and even so
The general,¹ subject to a well-wish'd king,
Quit their own part, and in obsequious fondness
Crowd to his presence, where their untaught love
Must needs appear offence.

Enter ISABELLA.

How now, fair maid ?

Isa. I am come to know your pleasure.

Ang. That you might know it, would much better
please me,
Than to demand what 'tis. Your brother cannot
live.

Isa. Even so ?—Heaven keep your honor !

[*retiring.*

¹ People.

Ang. Yet may he live awhile ; and, it may be,
As long as you or I : yet he must die.

Isa. Under your sentence ?

Ang. Yea.

Isa. When, I beseech you ? that in his reprieve,
Longer or shorter, he may be so fitted,
That his soul sicken not.

Ang. Ha ! Fie, these filthy vices ! It were as good
To pardon him, that hath from nature stolen
A man already made,¹ as to remit
Their saucy sweetness, that do coin Heaven's image
In stamps that are forbid : 'tis all as easy
Falsely to take away a life true made,
As to put mettle in restrained means,
To make a false one.

Isa. 'Tis set down so in heaven, but not in
earth.

Ang. Say you so ? then I shall poze you quickly.
Which had you rather ; that the most just law
Now took your brother's life ; or, to redeem him,
Give up your body to such sweet uncleanness,
As she that he hath stain'd ?

Isa. Sir, believe this ;
I had rather give my body than my soul.

Ang. I talk not of your soul ; our compell'd sins
Stand more for number than account.

Isa. How say you ?

Ang. Nay, I 'll not warrant that ; for I can speak

¹ That hath killed a man.

Against the thing I say. Answer to this ;—
I, now the voice of the recorded law,
Pronounce a sentence on your brother's life :
Might there not be a charity in sin,
To save this brother's life ?

Isa. Please you to do 't,
I'll take it as a peril to my soul,
It is no sin at all, but charity.

Ang. Pleased you to do 't, at peril of your soul,
Were equal poize of sin and charity.

Isa. That I do beg his life, if it be sin,
Heaven, let me bear it ! you granting of my suit,
If that be sin, I'll make it my morn prayer
To have it added to the faults of mine,
And nothing of your answer.

Ang. Nay, but hear me :
Your sense pursues not mine : either you are ignorant,

Or seem so, craftily ; and that's not good,

Isa. Let me be ignorant, and in nothing good,
But graciously to know I am no better.

Ang. Thus wisdom wishes to appear most bright,
When it doth tax itself : as these black masks
Proclaim an enshield¹ beauty ten times louder
Than beauty could display'd.—But mark me ;
To be received plain, I'll speak more gross :
Your brother is to die.

Isa. So.

¹ Enshielded, covered.

Ang. And his offence is so, as it appears,
Accountant to the law upon that pain.¹

Isa. True.

Ang. Admit no other way to save his life,
(As I subscribe not that,² nor any other,
But in the loss of question³) that you, his sister,
Finding yourself desired of such a person,
Whose credit with the judge, or own great place,
Could fetch your brother from the manacles
Of the all-binding law; and that there were
No earthly mean to save him, but that either
You must lay down the treasures of your body
To this supposed, or else to let him suffer;
What would you do?

Isa. As much for my poor brother as myself:
That is, were I under the terms of death,
The impression of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,
And strip myself to death, as to a bed
That longing I have been sick for, ere I'd yield
My body up to shame.

Ang. Then must your brother die.

Isa. And 'twere the cheaper way:
Better it were, a brother died at once,
Than that a sister, by redeeming him,
Should die for ever.

Ang. Were not you then as cruel as the sentence
That you have slander'd so?

¹ Penalty.

² Conversation.

³ As I agree not to that.

Isa. Ignomy¹ in ransom, and free pardon,
Are of two houses : lawful mercy is
Nothing akin to foul redemption.

Ang. You seem'd of late to make the law a
tyrant ;
And rather proved the sliding of your brother
A merriment than a vice.

Isa. O, pardon me, my lord ; it oft falls out,
To have what we'd have, we speak not what we
mean :

I something do excuse the thing I hate,
For his advantage that I dearly love.

Ang. We are all frail.

Isa. Else let my brother die,
If not a feodary,² but only he,
Owe,³ and succeed by weakness.

Ang. Nay, women are frail too.

Isa. Ay, as the glasses where they view them-
selves :

Which are as easy broke as they make forms.
Women !—Help Heaven ! men their creation mar
In profiting by them.⁴ Nay, call us ten times frail ;
For we are soft as our complexions are,
And credulous to false prints.⁵

Ang. I think it well :
And from this testimony of your own sex,
(Since, I suppose, we are made to be no stronger

¹ Ignominy. ² Associate in his crime. ³ Own.

⁴ In taking advantage of their weakness.

⁵ Take any impression.

Than faults may shake our frames) let me be bold ;—
I do arrest your words : be that you are,
That is, a woman ; if you be more, you're none ;
If you be one, (as you are well express'd
By all external warrants) show it now,
By putting on the destined livery.

Isa. I have no tongue but one : gentle my lord,
Let me entreat you speak the former language.

Ang. Plainly conceive, I love you.

Isa. My brother did love Juliet ; and you tell me,
That he shall die for it.

Ang. He shall not, Isabel, if you give me love.

Isa. I know, your virtue hath a license in 't,
Which seems a little fouler than it is,
To pluck on others.

Ang. Believe me, on mine honor,
My words express my purpose.

Isa. Ha ! little honor to be much believed,
And most pernicious purpose!—Seeming,¹ seeming!—
I will proclaim thee, Angelo ; look for 't :
Sign me a present pardon for my brother,
Or, with an outstretch'd throat, I'll tell the world
Aloud, what man thou art.

Ang. Who will believe thee, Isabel ?
My unsoil'd name, the austerity of my life,
My vouch² against you, and my place i' the state,
Will so your accusation overweigh,
That you shall stifle in your own report,

¹ Hypocrisy.

² Attestation.

And smell of calumny. I have begun;
And now I give my sensual race the rein.
Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite;
Lay by all nicety, and prolixious¹ blushes,
That banish what they sue for; redeem thy brother
By yielding up thy body to my will;
Or else he must not only die the death,
But thy unkindness shall his death draw out
To lingering sufferance: answer me to-morrow,
Or, by the affection that now guides me most,
I'll prove a tyrant to him. As for you,
Say what you can, my false o'erweighs your true.

[Exit.]

Isa. To whom shall I complain? Did I tell this,
Who would believe me? O perilous mouths,
That bear in them one and the self-same tongue,
Either of condemnation or approof!
Bidding the law make courtesy to their will;
Hooking both right and wrong to the appetite,
To follow as it draws! I'll to my brother:
Though he hath fallen by prompture² of the blood,
Yet hath he in him such a mind of honor,
That had he twenty heads to tender down
On twenty bloody blocks, he'd yield them up,
Before his sister should her body stoop
To such abhorrd pollution.
Then Isabel, live chaste, and, brother, die:
More than our brother is our chastity.

¹ Dilatory.

² Temptation, instigation.

I'll tell him yet of Angelo's request,
And fit his mind to death, for his soul's rest. [Exit.]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A room in the prison.

Enter DUKE, CLAUDIO, and PROVOST.

Duke. So, then you hope of pardon from lord
Angelo?

Clau. The miserable have no other medicine,
But only hope:

I have hope to live, and am prepared to die.

Duke. Be absolute for death;¹ either death, or
life,

Shall thereby be the sweeter. Reason thus with
life;—

If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing
That none but fools would keep: a breath thou art,
(Servile to all the skiey influences)

That dost this habitation, where thou keep'st,
Hourly afflict: merely, thou art death's fool;
For him thou labor'st by thy flight to shun,
And yet run'st toward him still. Thou art not
noble;

For all the accommodations that thou bear'st,

¹ Relinquish all hopes of life.

Are nursed by baseness. Thou art by no means
valiant ;

For thou dost fear the soft and tender fork
Of a poor worm. Thy best of rest is sleep,
And that thou oft provokest ; yet grossly fear'st
Thy death, which is no more. Thou art not
thyself ;

For thou exist'st on many a thousand grains
That issue out of dust. Happy thou art not ;
For what thou hast not, still thou strivest to get ;
And what thou hast, forget'st. Thou art not
certain ;

For thy complexion shifts to strange effects,¹
After the moon. If thou art rich, thou art poor ;
For, like an ass, whose back with ingots ² bows,
Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,
And death unloads thee. Friend hast thou none ;
For thine own bowels, which do call thee sire,
The mere effusion of thy proper loins,
Do curse the gout, serpigo,³ and the rheum,
For ending thee no sooner. Thou hast nor youth
nor age ;

But, as it were, an after-dinner's sleep,
Dreaming on both : for all thy blessed youth
Becomes as aged, and doth beg the alms
Of palsied eld ; ⁴ and when thou art old, and rich,
Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb, nor beauty,

¹ Affects, i. e. affections.

² Masses of metal.

³ A kind of tetter.

⁴ Old age.

To make thy riches pleasant. What's yet in this,
That bears the name of life? Yet in this life
Lie hid more thousand deaths: yet death we fear,
That makes these odds all even.

Clau. I humbly thank you.
To sue to live, I find, I seek to die;
And, seeking death, find life. Let it come on.

Enter ISABELLA.

Isa. What, ho! Peace here; grace and good
company!

Pro. Who's there? come in: the wish deserves
a welcome.

Duke. Dear sir, ere long I'll visit you again.

Clau. Most holy sir, I thank you.

Isa. My business is a word or two with Claudio.

Pro. And very welcome. Look, signior, here's
your sister.

Duke. Provost, a word with you.

Pro. As many as you please.

Duke. Bring me to hear them speak, where I
may be conceal'd,

Yet hear them. [*Exeunt Duke and Provost.*]

Clau. Now, sister, what's the comfort?

Isa. Why, as all comforts are; most good indeed:
Lord Angelo, having affairs to heaven,
Intends you for his swift ambassador,
Where you shall be an everlasting leiger:¹

¹ Resident.

Therefore your best appointment¹ make with speed;
To-morrow you set on.

Clau. Is there no remedy?

Isa. None, but such remedy, as, to save a head,
To cleave a heart in twain.

Clau. But is there any?

Isa. Yes, brother, you may live;
There is a devilish mercy in the judge,
If you'll implore it, that will free your life,
But fetter you till death.

Clau. Perpetual durance?

Isa. Ay, just, perpetual durance; a restraint,
Though all the world's vastidity² you had,
To a determined scope.³

Clau. But in what nature?

Isa. In such a one as (you consenting to 't)
Would bark⁴ your honor from that trunk you bear,
And leave you naked.

Clau. Let me know the point.

Isa. O, I do fear thee, Claudio; and I quake,
Lest thou a feverous life shouldst entertain,
And six or seven winters more respect
Than a perpetual honor. Darest thou die?
The sense of death is most in apprehension;
And the poor beetle, that we tread upon,
In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great
As when a giant dies.

¹ Preparation.

² Extent.

³ To one painful idea, i. e. to ignominy.

⁴ Strip.

Clau. Why give you me this shame ?
Think you I can a resolution fetch
From flowery tenderness ? If I must die,
I will encounter darkness as a bride,
And hug it in mine arms.

Isa. There spake my brother ; there my father's
grave
Did utter forth a voice ! Yes, thou must die :
Thou art too noble to conserve a life
In base appliances. This outward-sainted deputy,—
Whose settled visage and deliberate word
Nips youth i' the head, and follies doth enmew,¹
As falcon doth the fowl,—is yet a devil :
His filth within being cast,² he would appear
A pond as deep as hell.

Clau. The princely Angelo ?
Isa. O, 'tis the cunning livery of hell,
The damned'st body to invest and cover
In princely guards ! ³ Dost thou think, Claudio,
If I would yield him my virginity,
Thou mightst be freed ?

Clau. O Heavens ! it cannot be.
Isa. Yes, he would give it thee, from this rank
offence,
So to offend him still. This night's the time
That I should do what I abhor to name,
Or else thou diest to-morrow.

¹ Forces follies to lie in cover, without daring to show
themselves. ² Emptied. ³ Laced robes.

Clau. 'Thou shalt not do 't.

Isa. O, were it but my life,
I'd throw it down for your deliverance
As frankly as a pin.

Clau. Thanks, dear Isabel.

Isa. Be ready, Claudio, for your death to-morrow.

Clau. Yes.—Has he affections in him,
That thus can make him bite the law by the nose,
When he would force it? Sure it is no sin,
Or of the deadly seven it is the least.

Isa. Which is the least?

Clau. If it were damnable, he, being so wise,
Why, would he for the momentary trick¹
Be perdurable² fined?—O Isabel!

Isa. What says my brother?

Clau. Death is a fearful thing.

Isa. And shamed life a hateful.

Clau. Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit³
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world; or to be worse than worst
Of those, that lawless and uncertain thoughts

¹ Indulgence of a vicious appetite. ³ Lastingly.

² The spirit accustomed here to ease and delights.

Imagine howling!—'tis too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed worldly life,
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To what we fear of death.

Isa. Alas! alas!

Clau. Sweet sister, let me live:
What sin you do to save a brother's life,
Nature dispenses with the deed so far,
That it becomes a virtue.

Isa. O, you beast!
O, faithless coward! O, dishonest wretch!
Wilt thou be made a man out of my vice?
Is't not a kind of incest, to take life
From thine own sister's shame? What should I think?
Heaven shield, my mother play'd my father fair!
For such a warped slip of wilderness¹
Ne'er issued from his blood. Take my defiance:²
Die; perish! might but my bending down
Reprise thee from thy fate, it should proceed:
I'll pray a thousand prayers for thy death,
No word to save thee.

Clau. Nay, hear me, Isabel.

Isa. O, fie, fie, fie!
Thy sin's not accidental, but a trade:³
Mercy to thee would prove itself a bawd:
'Tis best that thou diest quickly. [going.]

Clau. O, hear me, Isabella.

¹ Wildness.

² Refusal.

³ An established habit.

Re-enter DUKE.

Duke. Vouchsafe a word, young sister, but one word.

Isa. What is your will ?

Duke. Might you dispense with your leisure, I would by and by have some speech with you : the satisfaction I would require is likewise your own benefit.

Isa. I have no superfluous leisure ; my stay must be stolen out of other affairs ; but I will attend you awhile.

Duke. [to *Claudio*, aside.] Son, I have overheard what hath passed between you and your sister. Angelo had never the purpose to corrupt her ; only he hath made an essay of her virtue, to practise his judgment with the disposition of natures : she, having the truth of honor in her, hath made him that gracious denial which he is most glad to receive. I am confessor to Angelo, and I know this to be true ; therefore prepare yourself to death. Do not satisfy your resolution with hopes that are fable : to-morrow you must die ; go to your knees, and make ready.

Clau. Let me ask my sister pardon. I am so out of love with life, that I will sue to be rid of it.

Duke. Hold you there :¹ farewell. [Exit *Claudio*.]

¹ Continue in that resolution.

Re-enter PROVOST.

Provost, a word with you.

Pro. What's your will, father?

Duke. That now you are come, you will be gone. Leave me awhile with the maid; my mind promises with my habit, no loss shall touch her by my company.

Pro. In good time.¹ [Exit Provost.

Duke. The hand, that hath made you fair, hath made you good: the goodness, that is cheap in beauty, makes beauty brief in goodness; but grace, being the soul of your complexion, shall keep the body of it ever fair. The assault, that Angelo hath made to you, fortune hath conveyed to my understanding; and, but that frailty hath examples for his falling, I should wonder at Angelo. How would you do to content this substitute, and to save your brother?

Isa. I am now going to resolve him. I had rather my brother die by the law, than my son should be unlawfully born. But, O, how much is the good duke deceived in Angelo! If ever he return, and I can speak to him, I will open my lips in vain, or discover his government.

Duke. That shall not be much amiss: yet, as the matter now stands, he will avoid your accusation; he made trial of you only.²—Therefore fasten your

¹ à la bonne heure, very well.

² That is, he will say he made trial of you only.

ear on my advisings ; to the love I have in doing good, a remedy presents itself. I do make myself believe, that you may most uprighteously do a poor wronged lady a merited benefit ; redeem your brother from the angry law ; do no stain to your own gracious person ; and much please the absent duke, if, peradventure, he shall ever return to have hearing of this business.

Isa. Let me hear you speak farther : I have spirit to do any thing that appears not foul in the truth of my spirit.

Duke. Virtue is bold, and goodness never fearful. Have you not heard speak of Mariana the sister of Frederic, the great soldier, who miscarried at sea ?

Isa. I have heard of the lady, and good words went with her name.

Duke. Her should this Angelo have married ; was affianced to her by oath, and the nuptial appointed : between which time of the contract, and limit of the solemnity, her brother Frederic was wrecked at sea, having in that perished vessel the dowry of his sister. But mark, how heavily this befel to the poor gentlewoman : there she lost a noble and renowned brother, in his love toward her ever most kind and natural ; with him the portion and sinew of her fortune, her marriage-dowry ; with both, her combineate¹ husband, this well-seeming Angelo !

Isa. Can this be so ? Did Angelo so leave her ?

¹ Betrothed.

Duke. Left her in her tears, and dried not one of them with his comfort ; swallowed his vows whole, pretending in her discoveries of dishonor : in few,¹ bestowed her on her own lamentation,² which she yet wears for his sake ; and he, a marble to her tears, is washed with them, but relents not.

Isa. What a merit were it in death, to take this poor maid from the world ! What corruption in this life, that it will let this man live !—But how out of this can she avail ?

Duke. It is a rupture that you may easily heal : and the cure of it not only saves your brother, but keeps you from dishonor in doing it.

Isa. Show me how, good father.

Duke. This fore-named maid hath yet in her the continuance of her first affection ; his unjust unkindness, that in all reason should have quenched her love, hath, like an impediment in the current, made it more violent and unruly. Go you to Angelo ; answer his requiring with a plausible obedience ; agree with his demands to the point : only refer yourself³ to this advantage,—first, that your stay with him may not be long ; that the time may have all shadow and silence in it ; and the place answer to convenience : this being granted in course, now follows all. We shall advise this wronged maid to stead up your appointment, go in your

¹ In short. ² Left her to her sorrows.

³ Have recourse.

place : if the encounter acknowlege itself hereafter, it may compel him to her recompense : and here, by this, is your brother saved, your honor untainted, the poor Mariana advantaged, and the corrupt deputy scaled.¹ The maid will I frame, and make fit for his attempt. If you think well to carry this as you may, the doubleness of the benefit defends the deceit from reproof. What think you of it ?

Isa. The image of it gives me content already ; and, I trust, it will grow to a most prosperous perfection.

Duke. It lies much in your holding up. Haste you speedily to Angelo ; if for this night he entreat you to his bed, give him promise of satisfaction. I will presently to St. Luke's ; there, at the moated grange,² resides this dejected Mariana. At that place call upon me ; and despatch with Angelo, that it may be quickly.

Isa. I thank you for this comfort. Fare you well, good father. [Exit severally.

SCENE II.

The street before the prison.

Enter DUKE as a Friar ; to him ELBOW, CLOWN, and Officers.

Elbow. Nay, if there be no remedy for it, but that

¹ Overreached, put to confusion.

² A grange is a solitary farm-house.

you will needs buy and sell men and women like beasts, we shall have all the world drink brown and white bastard.¹

Duke. O heavens ! what stuff is here ?

Clown. 'Twas never merry world, since, of two usurries, the merriest was put down, and the worser allowed by order of law a furred gown to keep him warm ; and furred with fox and lamb-skins too, to signify, that craft, being richer than innocency, stands for the facing.

Elbow. Come your way, sir.—Bless you, good father friar.

Duke. And you, good brother father. What offence hath this man made you, sir ?

Elbow. Marry, sir, he hath offended the law ; and, sir, we take him to be a thief too, sir ; for we have found upon him, sir, a strange pick-lock, which we have sent to the deputy.

Duke. Fie, sirrah ; a bawd, a wicked bawd !
The evil that thou causest to be done,
That is thy means to live. Do thou but think
What 'tis to cram a maw, or clothe a back,
From such a filthy vice : say to thyself,—
From their abominable and beastly touches
I drink, I eat, array myself, and live.
Canst thou believe thy living is a life,
So stinkingly depending ? Go, mend ; go, mend.

¹ A sweet wine, much used in our author's time.

Clown. Indeed, it does stink in some sort, sir ;
but yet, sir, I would prove—

Duke. Nay, if the devil have given thee proofs for
sin,

Thou wilt prove his. Take him to prison, officer ;
Correction and instruction must both work,
Ere this rude beast will profit.

Elbow. He must before the deputy, sir ; he has
given him warning : the deputy cannot abide a
whoremaster : if he be a whoremonger, and comes
before him, he were as good go a mile on his errand.

Duke. That we were all, as some would seem
to be,

From our faults, as faults from seeming, free !

Enter LUCIO.

Elbow. His neck will come to your waist, a cord,
sir.¹

Clown. I spy comfort ; I cry, bail. Here's a
gentleman, and a friend of mine.

Lucio. How now, noble Pompey ? What, at the
heels of Cæsar ? Art thou led in triumph ? What,
is there none of Pygmalion's images, newly made
woman, to be had now, for putting the hand in the
pocket, and extracting it clutched ? What reply ?
Ha ? What say'st thou to this tune, matter, and

¹ His neck will be tied, like your waist, with a rope. Some
orders of friars wear a hempen cord for a girdle.

method? Is't not drowned¹ i' the last rain? Ha! What say'st thou, trot? Is the world as it was, man? Which is the way?² Is it sad, and few words? Or how? The trick of it?

Duke. Still thus, and thus! still worse!

Lucio. How doth my dear morsel, thy mistress? Procures she still? Ha?

Clown. Troth, sir, she hath eaten up all her beef, and she is herself in the tub.

Lucio. Why, 'tis good; it is the right of it; it must be so: ever your fresh whore, and your powdered bawd: an unshunned³ consequence; it must be so. Art going to prison, Pompey?

Clown. Yes, faith, sir.

Lucio. Why, 'tis not amiss, Pompey: farewell: go; say, I sent thee thither. For debt, Pompey? or how?

Elbow. For being a bawd, for being a bawd.

Lucio. Well, then imprison him: if imprisonment be the due of a bawd, why, 'tis his right: bawd is he, doubtless, and of antiquity too; bawd-born. Farewell, good Pompey. Commend me to the prison, Pompey: you will turn good husband now, Pompey; you will keep the house.

Clown. I hope, sir, your good worship will be my bail.

Lucio. No, indeed, will I not, Pompey; it is not

¹ Meaning probably—Is not your answer drowned, &c. in allusion to the miserable appearance of Pompey.

² What is the mode now? ³ Inevitable.

the wear.¹ I will pray, Pompey, to increase your bondage : if you take it not patiently, why, your mettle is the more. Adieu, trusty Pompey.—Bless you, friar.

Duke. And you.

Lucio. Does Bridget paint still, Pompey ? Ha ?

Elbow. Come your ways, sir ; come.

Clown. You will not bail me then, sir ?

Lucio. Then, Pompey ? nor now.—What news abroad, friar ? What news ?

Elbow. Come your ways, sir ; come.

Lucio. Go,—to kennel, Pompey, go.

[*Exit Elbow, Clown, and Officers.*]

What news, friar, of the duke ?

Duke. I know none. Can you tell me of any ?

Lucio. Some say, he is with the emperor of Russia ; other some, he is in Rome. But where is he, think you ?

Duke. I know not where : but wheresoever, I wish him well.

Lucio. It was a mad fantastical trick of him, to steal from the state, and usurp the beggary he was never born to. Lord Angelo dukes it well in his absence ; he puts transgression to 't.

Duke. He does well in 't.

Lucio. A little more lenity to lechery would do no harm in him : something too crabbed that way, friar.

¹ Fashion.

Duke. It is too general a vice, and severity must cure it.

Lucio. Yes, in good sooth, the vice is of a great kindred; it is well allied: but it is impossible to extirp it quite, friar, till eating and drinking be put down. They say, this Angelo was not made by man and woman, after the downright way of creation. Is it true, think you?

Duke. How should he be made then?

Lucio. Some report, a sea-maid spawned him;—some, that he was begot between two stock-fishes.—But it is certain, that when he makes water, his urine is congealed ice; that I know to be true: and he is a motion¹ ungenerative, that's infallible.

Duke. You are pleasant, sir; and speak apace.

Lucio. Why, what a ruthless thing is this in him, for the rebellion of a cod-piece, to take away the life of a man? Would the duke, that is absent, have done this? Ere he would have hanged a man for the getting a hundred bastards, he would have paid for the nursing a thousand. He had some feeling of the sport; he knew the service, and that instructed him to mercy.

Duke. I never heard the absent duke much detected for women; he was not inclined that way.

Lucio. O sir, you are deceived.

Duke. 'Tis not possible.

Lucio. Who? not the duke? yes, your beggar of

¹ Puppet.

fifty ; and his use was, to put a ducat in her clack-dish :¹ the duke had crotchets² in him. He would be drunk too ; that let me inform you.

Duke. You do him wrong, surely.

Lucio. Sir, I was an inward³ of his. A shy fellow was the duke ; and, I believe, I know the cause of his withdrawing.

Duke. What, I pr'ythee, might be the cause ?

Lucio. No, — pardon ; — 'tis a secret must be locked within the teeth and the lips : but this I can let you understand :—The greater file of the subject⁴ held the duke to be wise.

Duke. Wise ? why, no question but he was.

Lucio. A very superficial, ignorant, unweighing⁵ fellow.

Duke. Either this is envy in you, folly, or mistaking : the very stream of his life, and the business he hath helmed,⁶ must, upon a warranted need, give him a better proclamation. Let him be but testimonied in his own bringings forth, and he shall appear to the envious, a scholar, a statesman, and a soldier. Therefore, you speak unskilfully ; or, if your knowlege be more, it is much darkened in your malice.

Lucio. Sir, I know him, and I love him.

¹ The beggars used to proclaim their wants by a wooden dish with a moveable cover, which they clacked, to show that their vessel was empty. ² Odd fancies.

³ Intimate friend.

⁴ The majority of his subjects.

⁵ Inconsiderate.

⁶ Steered through.

Duke. Love talks with better knowlege, and knowlege with dearer love.

Lucio. Come, sir, I know what I know.

Duke. I can hardly believe that, since you know not what you speak. But, if ever the duke return, (as our prayers are he may) let me desire you to make your answer before him. If it be honest you have spoke, you have courage to maintain it. I am bound to call upon you ; and, I pray you, your name ?

Lucio. Sir, my name is Lucio ; well known to the duke.

Duke. He shall know you better, sir, if I may live to report you.

Lucio. I fear you not.

Duke. O, you hope the duke will return no more ; or you imagine me too unhurtful an opposite.¹ But, indeed, I can do you little harm : you 'll forswear this again.

Lucio. I 'll be hanged first : thou art deceived in me, friar. But no more of this. Canst thou tell, if Claudio die to-morrow, or no ?

Duke. Why should he die, sir ?

Lucio. Why ? for filling a bottle with a tun-dish. I would, the duke, we talk of, were returned again : this ungenitured agent will unpeople the province with continency ; sparrows must not build in his house-eaves, because they are lecherous. The duke

¹ Opponent.

yet would have dark deeds darkly answered; he would never bring them to light: would he were returned! Marry, this Claudio is condemned for untrussing. Farewell, good friar; I pr'ythee, pray for me. The duke, I say to thee again, would eat mutton on Fridays. He's now past it; yet, and I say to thee, he would mouth with a beggar, though she smelt brown bread and garlick: say, that I said so. Farewell.

[Exit.]

Duke. No might nor greatness in mortality
Can censure 'scape: back-wounding calumny
The whitest virtue strikes. What king so strong,
Can tie the gall up in the slanderous tongue?
But who comes here?

Enter ESCALUS, PROVOST, BAWD, and Officers.

Esc. Go, away with her to prison.

Bawd. Good, my lord, be good to me; your honor is accounted a merciful man; good my lord.

Esc. Double and treble admonition, and still forfeit¹ in the same kind? This would make mercy swear, and play the tyrant.

Pro. A bawd of eleven years continuance, may it please your honor.

Bawd. My lord, this is one Lucio's information against me: mistress Kate Keep-down was with child by him in the duke's time; he promised her marriage; his child is a year and a quarter old, come

¹ Transgress.

Philip and Jacob. I have kept it myself; and see how he goes about to abuse me.

Esc. That fellow is a fellow of much license:—let him be called before us.—Away with her to prison. Go to; no more words. [*Exeunt Bawd and Officers.*] Provost, my brother Angelo will not be altered; Claudio must die to-morrow: let him be furnished with divines, and have all charitable preparation: if my brother wrought by my pity, it should not be so with him.

Pro. So please you, this friar hath been with him, and advised him for the entertainment of death.

Esc. Good even, good father.

Duke. Bliss and goodness on you!

Esc. Of whence are you?

Duke. Not of this country, though my chance is now

To use it for my time: I am a brother
Of gracious order, late come from the see,
In special business from his holiness.

Esc. What news abroad i' the world?

Duke. None, but that there is so great a fever on goodness, that the dissolution of it must cure it: novelty is only in request; and it is as dangerous to be aged in any kind of course, as it is virtuous to be constant in any undertaking. There is scarce truth enough alive, to make societies secure; but security enough, to make fellowships accursed: much upon this riddle runs the wisdom of the world. This news is old enough, yet it is every day's news. I pray you, sir, of what disposition was the duke?

Esc. One, that, above all other strifes, contended especially to know himself.

Duke. What pleasure was he given to?

Esc. Rather rejoicing to see another merry, than merry at any thing which professed to make him rejoice: a gentleman of all temperance. But leave we him to his events, with a prayer they may prove prosperous; and let me desire to know how you find Claudio prepared. I am made to understand, that you have lent him visitation.

Duke. He professes to have received no sinister measure from his judge, but most willingly humbles himself to the determination of justice: yet had he framed to himself, by the instruction of his frailty, many deceiving promises of life; which I, by my good leisure, have discredited to him, and now is he resolved¹ to die.

Esc. You have paid the heavens your function, and the prisoner the very debt of your calling. I have labored for the poor gentleman, to the extremest shore of my modesty; but my brother justice have I found so severe, that he hath forced me to tell him, he is indeed—justice.

Duke. If his own life answer the straitness of his proceeding, it shall become him well; wherein if he chance to fail, he hath sentenced himself.

Esc. I am going to visit the prisoner. Fare you well.

¹ Satisfied.

Duke. Peace be with you !

[*Ezeunt Escalus and Provost.*

He, who the sword of Heaven will bear,
Should be as holy as severe ;
Pattern in himself to know,
Grace to stand, and virtue go ;
More nor less to others paying,
Than by self-offences weighing.
Shame to him, whose cruel striking
Kills for faults of his own liking !
Twice treble shame on Angelo,
To weed my vice, and let his grow !
O, what may man within him hide,
Though angel on the outward side !
How may likeness,¹ made in crimes,²
Mocking, practise on the times,
To draw with idle spiders' strings
Most ponderous and substantial things !³
Craft against vice I must apply :
With Angelo to-night shall lie
His old betrothed, but despised ;
So disguise shall, by the disguised,
Pay with falsehood, false exacting,⁴
And perform an old contracting.

[*Exit.*

¹ Seeming virtue.

² Trained in iniquity.

³ To draw to themselves, by the flimsiest pretences, the most solid advantages, i. e. pleasure, honor, reputation, &c.

⁴ ‘So disguise shall, by means of a person disguised, return an injurious demand with a counterfeit person.’—Johnson.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A room in Mariana's house.

MARIANA discovered sitting; a Boy singing.

SONG.

Take, O, take those lips away,
 That so sweetly were forsworn;
 And those eyes, the break of day,
 Lights that do mislead the morn:
 But my kisses bring again,
 bring again,
 Seals of love, but seal'd in vain,
 seal'd in vain.

Mar. Break off thy song, and haste thee quick
 away:

Here comes a man of comfort, whose advice
 Hath often still'd my brawling discontent.—

[*Exit Boy.*]

Enter DUKE.

I cry you mercy, sir; and well could wish
 You had not found me here so musical:
 Let me excuse me, and believe me so,—
 My mirth it much displeased, but pleased my woe.¹
Duke. 'Tis good: though music oft hath such a
 charm,

¹ 'Though the music soothed my sorrows, it had no tendency to produce light merriment.'—Johnson.

To make bad, good, and good provoke to harm.
I pray you, tell me, hath any body inquired for me
here to-day? much upon this time have I promised
here to meet.

Mar. You have not been inquired after: I have
sat here all day.

Enter ISABELLA.

Duke. I do constantly¹ believe you.—The time is
come, even now. I shall crave your forbearance a
little; may be, I will call upon you anon, for some
advantage to yourself.

Mar. I am always bound to you. [Exit.
Duke. Very well met, and welcome.

What is the news from this good deputy?

Isa. He hath a garden circummured² with brick,
Whose western side is with a vineyard back'd;
And to that vineyard is a planch'd gate,³
That makes his opening with this bigger key:
This other doth command a little door,
Which from the vineyard to the garden leads.
There have I made my promise to call on him,
Upon the heavy middle of the night.

Duke. But shall you on your knowlege find this
way?

Isa. I have ta'en a due and wary note upon 't;
With whispering and most guilty diligence,

¹ Certainly.

² Walled round.

³ A gate made of planks.

In action all of precept, he did show me
The way twice o'er.

Duke. Are there no other tokens
Between you 'greed, concerning her observance ?

Isa. No, none, but only a repair i' the dark ;
And that I have possess'd¹ him, my most stay
Can be but brief : for I have made him know,
I have a servant comes with me along,
That stays upon me ; whose persuasion is,
I come about my brother.

Duke. 'Tis well borne up.
I have not yet made known to Mariana
A word of this.—What, ho ! within ! come forth !

Re-enter MARIANA.

I pray you, be acquainted with this maid ;
She comes to do you good.

Isa. I do desire the like.

Duke. Do you persuade yourself that I respect
you ?

Mar. Good friar, I know you do ; and have
found it.

Duke. Take then this your companion by the
hand,

Who hath a story ready for your ear :
I shall attend your leisure ; but make haste ;
The vaporous night approaches.

Mar. Will 't please you walk aside ?
[*Exeunt Mariana and Isabella.*

¹ Informed.

Duke. O place and greatness, millions of false eyes¹

Are stuck upon thee ! volumes of report
Run with these false and most contrarious quests²
Upon thy doings ! thousand 'scapes³ of wit
Make thee the father of their idle dream,
And rack thee in their fancies !—Welcome ! How agreed ?

Re-enter MARIANA and ISABELLA.

Isa. She 'll take the enterprise upon her, father,
If you advise it.

Duke. It is not my consent,
But my entreaty too.

Isa. Little have you to say,
When you depart from him, but, soft and low,
'Remember now my brother.'

Mar. Fear me not.

Duke. Nor, gentle daughter, fear you not at all :
He is your husband on a pre-contract :
To bring you thus together, 'tis no sin ;
Sith⁴ that the justice of your title to him
Doth florish⁵ the deceit. Come, let us go :
Our corn 's to reap, for yet our tithe 's to sow.

[*Exeunt.*

¹ Eyes insidious and traitorous.

² Inquisitions.

³ Sallies.

⁴ Since.

⁵ Gild, or varnish over.

SCENE II.

A room in the prison.

Enter PROVOST and CLOWN.

Pro. Come hither, sirrah. Can you cut off a man's head?

Clown. If the man be a bachelor, sir, I can: but if he be a married man, he is his wife's head, and I can never cut off a woman's head.

Pro. Come, sir, leave me your snatches,¹ and yield me a direct answer. To-morrow morning are to die Claudio and Barnardine. Here is in our prison a common executioner, who in his office lacks a helper: if you will take it on you to assist him, it shall redeem you from your gyves;² if not, you shall have your full time of imprisonment, and your deliverance with an unpitied³ whipping; for you have been a notorious bawd.

Clown. Sir, I have been an unlawful bawd, time out of mind; but yet I will be content to be a lawful hangman. I would be glad to receive some instruction from my fellow partner.

Pro. What ho, Abhorson! Where's Abhorson, there?

Enter ABHORSON.

Abh. Do you call, sir?

Pro. Sirrah, here's a fellow will help you to-

¹ Shuffling answers.

² Fetters.

³ Unmerciful.

morrow in your execution. If you think it meet, compound with him by the year, and let him abide here with you; if not, use him for the present, and dismiss him. He cannot plead his estimation with you; he hath been a bawd.

Ahh. A bawd, sir? Fie upon him! he will discredit our mystery.¹

Pro. Go to, sir; you weigh equally; a feather will turn the scale. [Exit.]

Clown. Pray, sir, by your good favor, (for, surely, sir, a good favor² you have, but that you have a hanging look) do you call, sir, your occupation a mystery?

Ahh. Ay, sir, a mystery.

Clown. Painting, sir, I have heard say, is a mystery; and your whores, sir, being members of my occupation, using painting, do prove my occupation a mystery: but what mystery there should be in hanging, if I should be hanged, I cannot imagine.

Ahh. Sir, it is a mystery.

Clown. Proof.

Ahh. Every true³ man's apparel fits your thief: if it be too little for your thief, your true man thinks it big enough; if it be too big for your thief, your thief thinks it little enough: so every true man's apparel fits your thief.

¹ Trade.

² Countenance.

³ Honest.

Re-enter PROVOST.

Pro. Are you agreed?

Clown. Sir, I will serve him; for I do find, your hangman is a more penitent trade than your bawd; he doth oftener ask forgiveness.

Pro. You, sirrah, provide your block and your axe, to-morrow, four o'clock.

Abh. Come on, bawd; I will instruct thee in my trade; follow.

Clown. I do desire to learn, sir; and, I hope, if you have occasion to use me for your own turn, you shall find me yare:¹ for, truly, sir, for your kindness, I owe you a good turn.

Pro. Call hither Barnardine and Claudio:

[*Exeunt Clown and Abhorsen.*

Th' one has my pity; not a jot the other,
Being a murderer, though he were my brother.

Enter CLAUDIO.

Look, here's the warrant, Claudio, for thy death:
'Tis now dead midnight, and by eight to-morrow
Thou must be made immortal. Where's Barnardine?

Claus. As fast lock'd up in sleep, as guiltless labor,

When it lies starkly² in the traveller's bones:
He will not wake.

¹ Ready.

² Stiffly.

Pro. Who can do good on him ?
Well, go, prepare yourself. But hark, what noise ?
[knocking within.
Heaven give your spirits comfort ! [Exit Claudio.
By and by :—
I hope it is some pardon or reprieve
For the most gentle Claudio.—Welcome, father.

Enter DUKE.

Duke. The best and wholesomest spirits of the
night
Envelop you, good provost ! Who call'd here of
late ?

Pro. None, since the curfew rung.

Duke. Not Isabel ?

Pro. No.

Duke. They will then, ere 't be long.

Pro. What comfort is for Claudio ?

Duke. There's some in hope.

Pro. It is a bitter deputy.

Duke. Not so, not so ; his life is parallel'd
Even with the stroke and line of his great justice ;
He doth with holy abstinence subdue
That in himself, which he spurs on his power
To qualify ¹ in others : were he meal'd ²
With that which he corrects, then were he tyran-
nous ;

¹ To temper, moderate.

² Defiled.

But this being so, he 's just.—Now are they come.—
[knocking within.—*Provost goes out.*
This is a gentle provost. Seldom, when
The steeled gaoler is the friend of men.—
How now? What noise? That spirit's possess'd
with haste,
That wounds the unsisting¹ postern with these
strokes.

PROVOST returns, speaking to one at the door.

Pro. There he must stay, until the officer
Arise to let him in; he is call'd up.

Duke. Have you no countermand for Claudio yet,
But he must die to-morrow?

Pro. None, sir, none.

Duke. As near the dawning, provost, as it is,
You shall hear more ere morning.

Pro. Happily,
You something know; yet, I believe, there comes
No countermand; no such example have we:
Besides, upon the very siege² of justice,
Lord Angelo hath to the public ear
Profess'd the contrary.

Enter MESSENGER.

Duke. This is his lordship's man.

Pro. And here comes Claudio's pardon.

¹ Never at rest, always opening.

² Seat.

Mes. My lord hath sent you this note ; and by me this farther charge, that you swerve not from the smallest article of it, neither in time, matter, or other circumstance. Good morrow ; for, as I take it, it is almost day.

Pro. I shall obey him. [Exit Messenger.

Duke. This is his pardon, purchased by such sin,
[aside.]

For which the pardoner himself is in :

Hence hath offence his quick celerity,

When it is borne in high authority :

When vice makes mercy, mercy's so extended,

That for the fault's love is the offender friended.—

Now, sir, what news ?

Pro. I told you. Lord Angelo, belike, thinking me remiss in mine office, awakens me with this unwonted putting on :¹ methinks, strangely ; for he hath not used it before.

Duke. Pray you, let's hear.

Pro. [reads.] ‘ Whatsoever you may hear to the contrary, let Claudio be executed by four of the clock ; and, in the afternoon, Barnardine : for my better satisfaction, let me have Claudio's head sent me by five. Let this be duly performed ; with a thought, that more depends on it than we must yet deliver. Thus fail not to do your office, as you will answer it at your peril.’

What say you to this, sir ?

¹ Spur, incitement.

Duke. What is that Barnardine, who is to be executed in the afternoon?

Pro. A Bohemian born, but here nursed up and bred: one that is a prisoner nine years old.¹

Duke. How came it, that the absent duke had not either delivered him to his liberty, or executed him? I have heard, it was ever his manner to do so.

Pro. His friends still wrought reprieves for him: and, indeed, his fact, till now in the government of lord Angelo, came not to an undoubtful proof.

Duke. Is it now apparent?

Pro. Most manifest, and not denied by himself.

Duke. Hath he borne himself penitently in prison? How seems he to be touched?

Pro. A man that apprehends death no more dreadfully, but as a drunken sleep; careless; reckless, and fearless of what's past, present, or to come; insensible of mortality, and desperately mortal.²

Duke. He wants advice.

Pro. He will hear none: he hath evermore had the liberty of the prison; give him leave to escape hence, he would not: drunk many times a day, if not many days intirely drunk. We have very often awaked him, as if to carry him to execution, and showed him a seeming warrant for it: it hath not moved him at all.

Duke. More of him anon. There is written in

¹ That has been confined these nine years.

² For mortally desperate, i. e. desperate in the extreme.

your brow, provost, honesty and constancy: if I read it not truly, my ancient skill beguiles me; but in the boldness of my cunning,¹ I will lay myself in hazard. Claudio, whom here you have a warrant to execute, is no greater forfeit to the law than Angelo who hath sentenced him. To make you understand this in a manifested effect, I crave but four days respite; for the which you are to do me both a present and a dangerous courtesy.

Pro. Pray, sir, in what?

Duke. In the delaying death.

Pro. Alack! how may I do it? having the hour limited; and an express command, under penalty, to deliver his head in the view of Angelo? I may make my case as Claudio's, to cross this in the smallest.

Duke. By the vow of mine order, I warrant you, if my instructions may be your guide. Let this Barnardine be this morning executed, and his head borne to Angelo.

Pro. Angelo hath seen them both, and will discover the favor.²

Duke. O death 's a great disguiser; and you may add to it. Shave the head, and tie the beard; and say, it was the desire of the penitent to be so bared before his death. You know, the course is common. If any thing fall to you upon this, more than thanks and good fortune, by the saint whom I profess, I will plead against it with my life.

¹ In confidence of my sagacity.

² Countenance.

Pro. Pardon me, good father ; it is against my oath.

Duke. Were you sworn to the duke, or to the deputy ?

Pro. To him, and to his substitutes.

Duke. You will think you have made no offence, if the duke avouch the justice of your dealing ?

Pro. But what likelihood is in that ?

Duke. Not a resemblance, but a certainty. Yet since I see you fearful, that neither my coat, integrity, nor my persuasion can with ease attempt you, I will go farther than I meant, to pluck all fears out of you. Look you, sir, here is the hand and seal of the duke. You know the character, I doubt not ; and the signet is not strange to you.

Pro. I know them both.

Duke. The contents of this is the return of the duke : you shall anon over-read it at your pleasure, where you shall find, within these two days he will be here. This is a thing that Angelo knows not ; for he this very day receives letters of strange tenor ; perchance, of the duke's death ; perchance, entering into some monastery ; but, by chance, nothing of what is writ. Look, the unfolding star calls up the shepherd.¹ Put not yourself into amazement, how these things should be : all difficulties are but easy when they are known. Call your executioner, and off with Barnardine's head. I will give

¹ So in Milton's Comus :—

The star, that bids the shepherd fold,
Now the top of heaven doth hold.

him a present shrift, and advise him for a better place. Yet you are amazed; but this shall absolutely resolve you.¹ Come away; it is almost clear dawn.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Another room in the same.

Enter CLOWN.

Clown. I am as well acquainted here, as I was in our house of profession: one would think, it were mistress Over-done's own house, for here be many of her old customers. First, here's young master Rash; he's in for a commodity of brown paper and old ginger, ninescore and seventeen pounds, of which he made five marks, ready money: marry, then, ginger was not much in request, for the old women were all dead. Then is there here one master Caper, at the suit of master Three-pile the mercer, for some four suits of peach-colored satin, which now peaches him a beggar. Then have we here young Dizy, and young master Deep-vow, and master Copper-spur, and master Starve-lackey the rapier and dagger-man, and young Drop-heir that killed lusty Pudding, and master Forthright the tilter, and brave master Shoe-tie the great traveller, and wild Half-can that stabbed Pots, and, I think, forty more; all great doers in our trade, and are now for the Lord's sake.

¹ Shall intirely convince you.

Enter ABHORSON.

Abh. Sirrah, bring Barnardine hither.

Clown. Master Barnardine ! you must rise and be hanged, master Barnardine !

Abh. What, ho, Barnardine !

Bar. [within.] A pox o' your throats ! Who makes that noise there ? What are you ?

Clown. Your friends, sir ; the hangman. You must be so good, sir, to rise and be put to death.

Bar. [within.] Away, you rogue, away ; I am sleepy.

Abh. Tell him, he must awake, and that quickly too.

Clown. Pray, master Barnardine, awake till you are executed, and sleep afterwards.

Abh. Go in to him, and fetch him out.

Clown. He is coming, sir, he is coming ; I hear his straw rustle.

Enter BARNARDINE.

Abh. Is the axe upon the block, sirrah ?

Clown. Very ready, sir.

Bar. How now, Abhorson ? what's the news with you ?

Abh. Truly, sir, I would desire you to clap into your prayers ; for, look you, the warrant's come.

Bar. You rogue, I have been drinking all night ; I am not fitted for 't.

Clown. O, the better, sir ; for he that drinks all

night, and is hanged betimes in the morning, may sleep the sounder all the next day.

Enter DUKE.

Ahh. Look you, sir, here comes your ghostly father. Do we jest now, think you?

Duke. Sir, induced by my charity, and hearing how hastily you are to depart, I am come to advise you, comfort you, and pray with you.

Bar. Friar, not I; I have been drinking hard all night, and I will have more time to prepare me, or they shall beat out my brains with billets. I will not consent to die this day, that's certain.

Duke. O, sir, you must: and therefore, I beseech you,

Look forward on the journey you shall go.

Bar. I swear, I will not die to-day for any man's persuasion.

Duke. But hear you,—

Bar. Not a word; if you have any thing to say to me, come to my ward; for thence will not I to-day. [Exit.]

Enter PROVOST.

Duke. Unfit to live or die. O, gravel heart!— After him, fellows: bring him to the block.

[*Exeunt Abhorson and Clown.*]

Pro. Now, sir, how do you find the prisoner?

Duke. A creature unprepared, unmeet for death; And, to transport him in the mind he is, Were damnable.

Pro. Here in the prison, father,
There died this morning of a cruel fever
One Ragozine, a most notorious pirate,
A man of Claudio's years : his beard and head
Just of his color. What if we do omit
This reprobate, till he were well inclined ;
And satisfy the deputy with the visage
Of Ragozine, more like to Claudio ?

Duke. O, 'tis an accident that Heaven provides !
Despatch it presently : the hour draws on
Prefix'd by Angelo. See, this be done,
And sent according to command ; whiles I
Persuade this rude wretch willingly to die.

Pro. This shall be done, good father, presently.
But Barnardine must die this afternoon :
And how shall we continue Claudio,
To save me from the danger that might come,
If he were known alive ?

Duke. Let this be done :—Put them in secret
holds,
Both Barnardine and Claudio. Ere twice
The sun hath made his journal greeting to
The under generation,¹ you shall find
Your safety manifested.

Pro. I am your free dependent.

Duke. Quick, despatch,
And send the head to Angelo. [Exit Provost.
Now will I write letters to Angelo :—

¹ The Antipodes.

The provost, he shall bear them,—whose contents
Shall witness to him, I am near at home ;
And that, by great injunctions, I am bound
To enter publicly : him I 'll desire
To meet me at the consecrated fount,
A league below the city ; and from thence,
By cold gradation and weal-balanced form,
We shall proceed with Angelo.

Re-enter PROVOST.

Pro. Here is the head : I 'll carry it myself.

Duke. Convenient is it. Make a swift return ;
For I would commune with you of such things,
That want no ear but yours.

Pro. I 'll make all speed.

[*Exit.*]

Isa. [within.] Peace, ho, be here !

Duke. The tongue of Isabel.—She 's come to
know,
If yet her brother's pardon be come hither :
But I will keep her ignorant of her good,
To make her heavenly comforts of despair,
When it is least expected.

Enter ISABELLA.

Isa. Ho, by your leave.

Duke. Good morning to you, fair and gracious
daughter.

Isa. The better, given me by so holy a man.
Hath yet the deputy sent my brother's pardon ?

Duke. He hath released him, Isabel, from the world :

His head is off, and sent to Angelo.

Isa. Nay, but it is not so.

Duke. It is no other :

Show your wisdom, daughter, in your close patience.

Isa. O, I will to him, and pluck out his eyes.

Duke. You shall not be admitted to his sight.

Isa. Unhappy Claudio ! wretched Isabel !

Injurious world ! most damned Angelo !

Duke. This nor hurts him, nor profits you a jot :
Forbear it therefore ; give your cause to Heaven.

Mark what I say ; which you shall find,

By every syllable, a faithful verity :

The duke comes home to-morrow ;—nay, dry your eyes ;

One of our convent, and his confessor,

Gives me this instance.¹ Already he hath carried

Notice to Escalus and Angelo ;

Who do prepare to meet him at the gates,

There to give up their power. If you can, pace your wisdom

In that good path that I would wish it go ;

And you shall have your bosom ² on this wretch,

Grace of the duke, revenges to your heart,

And general honor.

Isa. I am directed by you.

Duke. This letter then to friar Peter give ;

¹ Proof.

² Your heart's desire.

'Tis that he sent me of the duke's return :
Say, by this token, I desire his company
At Mariana's house to-night. Her cause and yours
I'll perfect him withal ; and he shall bring you
Before the duke, and to the head of Angelo
Accuse him home and home. For my poor self,
I am combined ¹ by a sacred vow,
And shall be absent. Wend ² you with this letter :
Command these fretting waters from your eyes
With a light heart : trust not my holy order,
If I pervert your course.—Who's here ?

Enter LUCIO.

Lucio. Good even !
Friar, where is the provost ?

Duke. Not within, sir.

Lucio. O, pretty Isabella, I am pale at mine heart
to see thine eyes so red : thou must be patient. I
am fain to dine and sup with water and bran ; I
dare not for my head fill my belly ; one fruitful
meal would set me to 't. But they say the duke will
be here to-morrow.—By my troth, Isabel, I loved
thy brother : if the old fantastical duke of dark
corners had been at home, he had lived.

[*Exit Isabella.*

Duke. Sir, the duke is marvellous little beholden
to your reports ; but the best is, he lives not in
them.

¹ Bound.

² Go.

Lucio. Friar, thou knowest not the duke so well as I do : he's a better woodman than thou takest him for.

Duke. Well, you'll answer this one day. Fare ye well.

Lucio. Nay, tarry ; I'll go along with thee : I can tell thee pretty tales of the duke.

Duke. You have told me too many of him already, sir, if they be true ; if not true, none were enough.

Lucio. I was once before him for getting a wench with child.

Duke. Did you such a thing ?

Lucio. Yes, marry, did I ; but was fain to forswear it : they would else have married me to the rotten medlar.

Duke. Sir, your company is fairer than honest. Rest you well.

Lucio. By my troth, I'll go with thee to the lane's end. If bawdy talk offend you, we'll have very little of it. Nay, friar, I am a kind of burr ; I shall stick.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

A room in Angelo's house.

Enter ANGELO and ESCALUS.

Esc. Every letter he hath writ hath disvouched¹ other.

¹ Contradicted.

Ang. In most uneven and distracted manner. His actions show much like to madness: pray Heaven, his wisdom be not tainted! And why meet him at the gates, and re-deliver our authorities there?

Esc. I guess not.

Ang. And why should we proclaim it in an hour before his entering, that, if any crave redress of injustice, they should exhibit their petitions in the street?

Esc. He shows his reason for that: to have a despatch of complaints; and to deliver us from devices hereafter, which shall then have no power to stand against us.

Ang. Well, I beseech you, let it be proclaim'd: Betimes i' the morn, I'll call you at your house: Give notice to such men of sort and suit,¹ As are to meet him.

Esc. I shall, sir: fare you well. [*Exit.*]

Ang. Good night.—

This deed unshapes me quite, makes me un-pregnant,²

And dull to all proceedings. A deflower'd maid!
And by an eminent body, that enforced
The law against it!—But that her tender shame
Will not proclaim against her maiden loss,
How might she tongue me? Yet reason dares her?³

—no :

¹ Figure and rank.

² Unprepared.

³ Yet does not reason challenge or incite her to accuse me?

For my authority bears off a credit bulk,¹
 That no particular scandal once can touch,
 But it confounds the breather.² He should have
 lived,

Save that his riotous youth, with dangerous sense,
 Might, in the times to come, have ta'en revenge,
 By so receiving a dishonor'd life,
 With ransom of such shame. Would yet he had
 lived !

Alack, when once our grace we have forgot,
 Nothing goes right; we would, and we would not.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE V.

Fields without the town.

Enter DUKE in his own habit, and FRIAR PETER.

Duke. These letters at fit time deliver me.

[*giving letters.*]

The provost knows our purpose, and our plot.
 The matter being afoot, keep your instruction,
 And hold you ever to our special drift;
 Though sometimes you do blench ³ from this to that,
 As cause doth minister. Go, call at Flavius' house,
 And tell him where I stay: give the like notice
 To Valentinus, Rowland, and to Crassus,
 And bid them bring the trumpets to the gate;
 But send me Flavius first.

¹ Carries with it unquestionable credit.

² Utterer.

³ Start off.

F. Peter. It shall be speeded well.

[*Exit Friar.*]

Enter VARRIUS.

Duke. I thank thee, Varrius; thou hast made good haste: Come, we will walk. There's other of our friends Will greet us here anon, my gentle Varrius.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.

Street near the city gate.

Enter ISABELLA and MARIANA.

Isa. To speak so indirectly, I am loath: I would say the truth; but to accuse him so, That is your part: yet I'm advised to do it; He says, to veil full purpose.¹

Mar. Be ruled by him.

Isa. Besides, he tells me, that, if peradventure He speak against me on the adverse side, I should not think it strange; for 'tis a physic, That's bitter to sweet end.

Mar. I would, friar Peter—

Isa. O, peace; the friar is come.

Enter FRIAR PETER.

F. Peter. Come, I have found you out a stand most fit,

¹ To hide the whole extent of our design.

Where you may have such vantage on the duke,
He shall not pass you. Twice have the trumpets
sounded;

The generous¹ and gravest citizens
Have hent² the gates, and very near upon
The duke is entering; therefore hence, away.

[*Exeunt.*

A C T V.

SCENE I.

A public place near the city gate.

MARIANA (*veiled*), ISABELLA, and PETER, at a distance.

Enter, at opposite doors, DUKE, VARRIUS, Lords;
ANGELO, ESCALUS, LUCIO, PROVOST, Officers, and
Citizens.

Duke. My very worthy cousin, fairly met:—
Our old and faithful friend, we are glad to see you.

Ang. and Esc. Happy return be to your royal
grace!

Duke. Many and hearty thankings to you both.
We have made inquiry of you; and we hear
Such goodness of your justice, that our soul
Cannot but yield you forth to public thanks,
Forerunning more requital.

Ang. You make my bonds still greater.

Duke. O, your desert speaks loud; and I should
wrong it,

¹ Noble.

² Taken possession of.

To lock it in the wards of covert bosom,
When it deserves with characters of brass
A forted residence 'gainst the tooth of time,
And rasure of oblivion. Give me your hand,
And let the subject see, to make them know,
That outward courtesies would fain proclaim
Favors that keep within.—Come, Escalus ;
You must walk by us on our other hand ;—
And good supporters are you.

PETER and ISABELLA come forward.

F. Peter. Now is your time ; speak loud, and
kneel before him.

Isa. Justice, O royal duke ! Vail¹ your regard
Upon a wrong'd, I'd fain have said, a maid !
O worthy prince, dishonor not your eye
By throwing it on any other object,
Till you have heard me in my true complaint,
And given me justice, justice, justice, justice !

Duke. Relate your wrongs. In what ? By whom ?
Be brief.

Here is lord Angelo shall give you justice ;
Reveal yourself to him.

Isa. O, worthy duke,
You bid me seek redemption of the devil :
Hear me yourself ; for that which I must speak
Must either punish me, not being believed,
Or wring redress from you : hear me, O, hear me,
here.

¹ Lower.

Ang. My lord, her wits, I fear me, are not firm :
She hath been a suitor to me for her brother,
Cut off by course of justice.

Isa. By course of justice !

Ang. And she will speak most bitterly and
strange.

Isa. Most strange, but yet most truly, will I
speak :

That Angelo's forswn ; is it not strange ?
That Angelo's a murderer ; is 't not strange ?
That Angelo is an adulterous thief,
A hypocrite, a virgin-violator ;
Is it not strange, and strange ?

Duke. Nay, ten times strange.

Isa. It is not truer he is Angelo,
Than this is all as true as it is strange :
Nay, it is ten times true ; for truth is truth
To the end of reckoning.

Duke. Away with her.—Poor soul,
She speaks this in the infirmity of sense.

Isa. O prince, I conjure thee, as thou believest
There is another comfort than this world,
That thou neglect me not, with that opinion
That I am touch'd with madness : make not impos-
sible

That which but seems unlike : 'tis not impossible,
But one, the wickedest caitiff on the ground,
May seem as shy, as grave, as just, as absolute,¹

¹ As complete in all the round of duty.

As Angelo ; even so may Angelo,
In all his dressings, characts,¹ titles, forms,
Be an arch-villain : believe it, royal prince,
If he be less, he 's nothing ; but he 's more,
Had I more name for badness.

Duke. By mine honesty,
If she be mad, (as I believe no other)
Her madness hath the oddest frame of sense,
Such a dependency of thing on thing,
As e'er I heard in madness.

Isa. O, gracious duke,
Harp not on that ; nor do not banish reason
For inequality :² but let your reason serve
To make the truth appear, where it seems hid ;
And hide the false, seems true.³

Duke. Many that are not mad,
Have, sure, more lack of reason.—What would you
say ?

Isa. I am the sister of one Claudio,
Condemn'd upon the act of fornication
To lose his head ; condemn'd by Angelo :
I, in probation of a sisterhood,
Was sent to by my brother. One Lucio
As then the messenger :—

Lucio. That 's I, an 't like your grace :
I came to her from Claudio, and desired her

¹ Habiliments and characters of office.

² Apparent inconsistency.

³ And for ever hide, i. e. plunge into eternal darkness, the
false one, i. e. Angelo, who now seems honest.

To try her gracious fortune with lord Angelo,
For her poor brother's pardon.

Isa. That's he, indeed.

Duke. You were not bid to speak.

Lucio. No, my good lord ;
Nor wish'd to hold my peace.

Duke. I wish you now then ;
Pray you, take note of it : and when you have
A business for yourself, pray Heaven, you then
Be perfect.

Lucio. I warrant your honor.

Duke. The warrant's for yourself ; take heed
to it.

Isa. This gentleman told somewhat of my tale.

Lucio. Right.

Duke. It may be right ; but you are in the wrong
To speak before your time.—Proceed.

Isa. I went
To this pernicious caitiff deputy.

Duke. That's somewhat madly spoken.

Isa. Pardon it ;
The phrase is to the matter.

Duke. Mended again : the matter :—proceed.

Isa. In brief,—to set the needless process by,
How I persuaded, how I pray'd and kneel'd,
How he refell'd¹ me, and how I replied ;
(For this was of much length) the vile conclusion
I now begin with grief and shame to utter :

¹ Refuted.

He would not, but by gift of my chaste body
To his concupiscent intemperate lust,
Release my brother; and, after much debate,
My sisterly remorse¹ confutes mine honor,
And I did yield to him. But the next morn betimes,
His purpose surfeiting, he sends a warrant
For my poor brother's head.

Duke. This is most likely!

Isa. O, that it were as like, as it is true!

Duke. By heaven, fond² wretch, thou know'st
not what thou speak'st;
Or else thou art suborn'd against his honor,
In hateful practice.³ First, his integrity
Stands without blemish:—next, it imports no
reason,

That with such vehemency he should pursue
Faults proper to himself: if he had so offended,
He would have weigh'd thy brother by himself,
And not have cut him off. Some one hath set
you on;

Confess the truth, and say by whose advice
Thou camest here to complain.

Isa. And is this all?
Then, O, you blessed ministers above,
Keep me in patience; and, with ripen'd time,
Unfold the evil which is here wrapp'd up
In countenance!⁴—Heaven shield your grace from
woe,

¹ Pity. ² Foolish. ³ Conspiracy. ⁴ False appearance.

As I, thus wrong'd, hence unbelieved go !

Duke. I know, you'd fain be gone !—An officer !
To prison with her.—Shall we thus permit
A blasting and a scandalous breath to fall
On him so near us ? This needs must be a practice.¹
—Who knew of your intent, and coming hither ?

Isa. One that I would were here, friar Lodowick.

Duke. A ghostly father, belike.—Who knows
that Lodowick ?

Lucio. My lord, I know him ; 'tis a medling
friar ;

I do not like the man : had he been lay, my lord,
For certain words he spake against your grace
In your retirement, I had swinged him soundly.

Duke. Words against me ? This a good friar,
belike !

And to set on this wretched woman here
Against our substitute !—Let this friar be found.

Lucio. But yesternight, my lord, she and that
friar

I saw them at the prison : a saucy friar,
A very scurvy fellow.

F. Peter. Blessed be your royal grace !
I have stood by, my lord, and I have heard
Your royal ear abused. First, hath this woman
Most wrongfully accused your substitute ;
Who is as free from touch or soil with her,
As she from one ungot.

¹ Conspiracy.

Duke. We did believe no less.
Know you that friar Lodowick, that she speaks of ?
F. Peter. I know him for a man divine and holy ;
Not scurvy, nor a temporary medler,
As he 's reported by this gentleman ;
And, on my trust, a man that never yet
Did, as he vouches, misreport your grace.

Lucio. My lord, most villanously ; believe it.
F. Peter. Well, he in time may come to clear
himself ;
But at this instant he is sick, my lord,
Of a strange fever. Upon his mere request,
(Being come to knowlege that there was complaint
Intended 'gainst lord Angelo) came I hither,
To speak, as from his mouth, what he doth know
Is true and false ; and what he with his oath,
And all probation, will make up full clear,
Whensoever he 's convened.¹ First, for this wo-
man ;

(To justify this worthy nobleman,
So vulgarly ² and personally accused)
Her shall you hear disproved to her eyes,
Till she herself confess it.

Duke. Good friar, let 's hear it.
[*Isabella is carried off, guarded ; and
Mariana comes forward.*]

Do you not smile at this, lord Angelo ?—
O heaven ! the vanity of wretched fools !—

¹ Convened.

² Publicly.

Give us some seats.—Come, cousin Angelo ;
In this I 'll be impartial ; be you judge
Of your own cause.—Is this the witness, friar ?
First let her show her face, and after speak.

Mar. Pardon, my lord ; I will not show my face,
Until my husband bid me.

Duke. What, are you married ?

Mar. No, my lord.

Duke. Are you a maid ?

Mar. No, my lord.

Duke. A widow then ?

Mar. Neither, my lord.

Duke. Why, you

Are nothing then :—neither maid, widow, nor wife ?

Lucio. My lord, she may be a punk ; for many of
them are neither maid, widow, nor wife.

Duke. Silence that fellow. I would, he had some
cause

To prattle for himself.

Lucio. Well, my lord.

Mar. My lord, I do confess I ne'er was married ;
And, I confess, besides, I am no maid :
I have known my husband ; yet my husband knows
not

That ever he knew me.

Lucio. He was drunk then, my lord ; it can be
no better.

Duke. For the benefit of silence, would thou wert
so too !

Lucio. Well, my lord.

Duke. This is no witness for lord Angelo.

Mar. Now I come to 't, my lord :
She, that accuses him of fornication,
In self-same manner doth accuse my husband ;
And charges him, my lord, with such a time,
When I 'll depose I had him in mine arms,
With all the effect of love.

Ang. Charges she more than me ?

Mar. Not that I know.

Duke. No ? you say, your husband.

Mar. Why, just, my lord, and that is Angelo,
Who thinks, he knows, that he ne'er knew my body ;
But knows, he thinks, that he knows Isabel's.

Ang. This is a strange abuse.¹—Let 's see thy
face.

Mar. My husband bids me ; now I will unmask.

[unveiling.]

This is that face, thou cruel Angelo,
Which, once thou sworest, was worth the looking
on :

This is the hand, which, with a vow'd contract,
Was fast belock'd in thine : this is the body
That took away the match from Isabel,
And did supply thee at thy garden-house,
In her imagined person.

Duke. Know you this woman ?

Lucio. Carnally, she says.

Duke. Sirrah, no more.

Lucio. Enough, my lord.

¹ Deception.

Ang. My lord, I must confess, I know this woman ;
And, five years since, there was some speech of
marriage

Betwixt myself and her ; which was broke off,
Partly, for that her promised proportions
Came short of composition ;¹ but, in chief,
For that her reputation was disvalued
In levity : since which time, of five years,
I never spake with her, saw her, nor heard from her,
Upon my faith and honor.

Mar. Noble prince,
As there comes light from heaven, and words from
breath,

As there is sense in truth, and truth in virtue,
I am affianced² this man's wife, as strongly
As words could make up vows : and, my good lord,
But Tuesday night last gone, in his garden-house,
He knew me as a wife. As this is true,
Let me in safety raise me from my knees ;
Or else for ever be confixed here,
A marble monument !

Ang. I did but smile till now :
Now, good my lord, give me the scope of justice.
My patience here is touch'd : I do perceive,
These poor informal³ women are no more
But instruments of some more mightier member
That sets them on. Let me have way, my lord,
To find this practice⁴ out.

¹ Fell short of the contract.

² Betrothed.

³ Crazy.

⁴ Conspiracy.

Duke. Ay, with my heart ;
And punish them unto your height of pleasure.—
Thou foolish friar ! and thou pernicious woman,
Compact with her that's gone ! think'st thou, thy
oaths,
Though they would swear down each particular
saint,
Were testimonies against his worth and credit,
That's seal'd in approbation ?—You, lord Escalus,
Sit with my cousin ; lend him your kind pains
To find out this abuse, whence 'tis derived.—
There is another friar that set them on ;
Let him be sent for.

F. Peter. Would he were here, my lord ! for he,
indeed,
Hath set the women on to this complaint :
Your provost knows the place where he abides,
And he may fetch him.

Duke. Go, do it instantly.— [Exit Provost.
And you, my noble and well-warranted cousin,
Whom it concerns to hear this matter forth,¹
Do with your injuries as seems you best,
In any chastisement. I for awhile
Will leave you ; but stir not you, till you have well
Determined upon these slanderers.

Esc. My lord, we'll do it thoroughly.—[Exit
Duke.] Signior Lucio, did not you say, you knew
that friar Lodowick to be a dishonest person ?

Lucio. *Cucullus non facit monachum :*² honest in

¹ To the end.

² A hood makes not a monk.

nothing, but in his clothes ; and one that hath spoke most villainous speeches of the duke.

Esc. We shall entreat you to abide here till he come, and enforce them against him : we shall find this friar a notable fellow.

Lucio. As any in Vienna, on my word.

Esc. Call that same Isabel here once again : [to an Attendant.] I would speak with her. Pray you, my lord, give me leave to question : you shall see how I 'll handle her.

Lucio. Not better than he, by her own report.

Esc. Say you ?

Lucio. Marry, sir, I think, if you handled her privately, she would sooner confess ; perchance, publicly she 'll be ashamed.

Re-enter Officers, with ISABELLA, the DUKE in the friar's habit, and PROVOST.

Esc. I will go darkly to work with her.

Lucio. That 's the way ; for women are light at midnight.

Esc. Come on, mistress : [to Isabella.] here 's a gentlewoman denies all that you have said.

Lucio. My lord, here comes the rascal I spoke of, here with the provost.

Esc. In very good time :—speak not you to him, till we call upon you.

Lucio. Mum.

Esc. Come, sir. Did you set these women on to slander lord Angelo ? they have confessed you did.

Duke. 'Tis false.

Esc. How ! know you where you are ?

Duke. Respect to your great place ! and let the devil

Be sometime honor'd for his burning throne.—

Where is the duke ? 'tis he should hear me speak.

Esc. The duke's in us, and we will hear you speak :

Look, you speak justly.

Duke. Boldly, at least.—But, O, poor souls, Come you to seek the lamb here of the fox ?

Good night to your redress. Is the duke gone ?

Then is your cause gone too. The duke's unjust,

Thus to retort¹ your manifest appeal,

And put your trial in the villain's mouth,

Which here you come to accuse.

Lucio. This is the rascal ; this is he I spoke of.

Esc. Why, thou unreverend and unhallow'd friar !

Is 't not enough, thou hast suborn'd these women

To accuse this worthy man ; but, in foul mouth,

And in the witness of his proper ear,

To call him villain ?

And then to glance from him to the duke himself ;

To tax him with injustice ?—Take him hence ;

To the rack with him.—We'll touze you joint by joint,

But we will know this purpose.—What ! unjust ?

Duke. Be not so hot : the duke

Dare no more stretch this finger of mine, than he

¹ To refer back to Angelo.

Dare rack his own : his subject am I not,
Nor here provincial.¹ My business in this state
Made me a looker-on here in Vienna,
Where I have seen corruption boil and bubble,
Till it o'er-run the stew : laws for all faults ;
But faults so countenanced, that the strong statutes
Stand like the forfeits in a barber's shop,
As much in mock as mark.

Esc. Slander to the state ! Away with him to
prison.

Ang. What can you vouch against him, signior
Lucio ?

Is this the man that you did tell us of ?

Lucio. 'Tis he, my lord. Come hither, goodman
bald-pate. Do you know me ?

Duke. I remember you, sir, by the sound of your
voice. I met you at the prison, in the absence of
the duke.

Lucio. O, did you so ? And do you remember
what you said of the duke.

Duke. Most notedly, sir.

Lucio. Do you so, sir ? And was the duke a flesh-
monger, a fool, and a coward, as you then reported
him to be ?

Duke. You must, sir, change persons with me,
ere you make that my report : you, indeed, spoke so
of him ; and much more, much worse.

Lucio. O thou damnable fellow ! Did not I pluck
thee by the nose for thy speeches ?

¹ Nor of any province dependent on the duke.

Duke. I protest, I love the duke as I love myself.

Ang. Hark ! how the villain would close now, after his treasonable abuses.

Esc. Such a fellow is not to be talked withal.— Away with him to prison.—Where is the provost ? —Away with him to prison ; lay bolts enough upon him : let him speak no more.—Away with those giglots¹ too, and with the other confederate companion.

[*The Provost lays hands on the Duke.*]

Duke. Stay, sir ; stay awhile.

Ang. What ! resists he ? Help him, Lucio.

Lucio. Come, sir ; come, sir ; come, sir ; foh, sir. Why, you bald-pated, lying rascal ! you must be hooded, must you ? Show your knave's visage, with a pox to you ! show your sheep-biting face, and be hanged an hour ! Will 't not off ?

[*Pulls off the friar's hood, and discovers the Duke.*]

Duke. Thou art the first knave that e'er made a duke.—

First, provost, let me bail these gentle three :—

Sneak not away, sir ; [to *Lucio.*] for the friar and you

Must have a word anon :—lay hold on him.

Lucio. This may prove worse than hanging.

Duke. What you have spoke, I pardon ; sit you down.— [to *Escalus.*]

We 'll borrow place of him.—Sir, by your leave :

[to *Angelo.*]

¹ Wanton wenches.

Hast thou or word, or wit, or impudence,
That yet can do thee office ?¹ If thou hast,
Rely upon it till my tale be heard,
And hold no longer out.

Ang. O my dread lord,
I should be guiltier than my guiltiness,
To think I can be undiscernible,
When I perceive, your grace, like power divine,
Hath look'd upon my passes.² Then, good prince,
No longer session hold upon my shame,
But let my trial be mine own confession :
Immediate sentence then, and sequent death,
Is all the grace I beg.

Duke. Come hither, Mariana.—
Say, wast thou e'er contracted to this woman ?

Ang. I was, my lord.

Duke. Go, take her hence, and marry her instantly.—

Do you the office, friar ; which consummate,
Return him here again.—Go with him, provost.

[*Exeunt Angelo, Mariana, Peter, and Provost.*

Esc. My lord, I am more amazed at his dis-honor,

Than at the strangeness of it.

Duke. Come hither, Isabel :
Your friar is now your prince. As I was then
Advertising, and holy³ to your business,

¹ Service. ² Artful devices.

³ Attentive and faithful.

Not changing heart with habit, I am still
Attorney'd at your service.

Isa. O, give me pardon,
That I, your vassal, have employ'd and pain'd
Your unknown sovereignty.

Duke. You are pardon'd, Isabel :
And now, dear maid, be you as free to us.¹
Your brother's death, I know, sits at your heart ;
And you may marvel, why I obscured myself,
Laboring to save his life ; and would not rather
Make rash remonstrance ² of my hidden power,
Than let him so be lost. O most kind maid !
It was the swift celerity of his death,
Which I did think with slower foot came on,
That brain'd my purpose.³ But, peace be with
him !
That life is better life, past fearing death,
Than that which lives to fear : make it your com-
fort,
So happy is your brother.

Re-enter ANGELO, MARIANA, PETER, and PROVOST.

Isa. I do, my lord.

Duke. For this new-married man, approaching
here,
Whose salt imagination yet hath wrong'd

¹ Pardon us as we have pardoned you.

² Premature discovery.

³ Knocked my design on the head.

Your well-defended honor, you must pardon
For Mariana's sake: but as he adjudged your
brother,

(Being criminal, in double violation
Of sacred chastity, and of promise-breach,
Thereon dependent, for your brother's life)
The very mercy of the law cries out
Most audible, even from his proper¹ tongue,
' An Angelo for Claudio, death for death.'
Haste still pays haste, and leisure answers leisure;
Like doth quit like, and *Measure* still for *Measure*.
Then, Angelo, thy fault's thus manifested;
Which though thou wouldest deny, denies thee van-
tage :²

We do condemn thee to the very block
Where Claudio stoop'd to death, and with like
haste :—

Away with him.

Mar. O, my most gracious lord,
I hope you will not mock me with a husband!

Duke. It is your husband mock'd you with a hus-
band :

Consenting to the safeguard of your honor,
I thought your marriage fit; else imputation,
For that he knew you, might reproach your life,
And choke your good to come: for his possessions,
Although by confiscation they are ours,
We do instate and widow you withal,

¹ Own.

² The denial of which will avail thee nothing.

To buy you a better husband.

Mar. O, my dear lord,
I crave no other, nor no better man.

Duke. Never crave him : we are definitive.

Mar. Gentle, my liege,— [kneeling.]

Duke. You do but lose your labor :
Away with him to death.—Now, sir, [to *Lucio.*] to
you.

Mar. O, my good lord !—Sweet Isabel, take my
part ;
Lend me your knees, and all my life to come
I 'll lend you, all my life to do you service.

Duke. Against all sense¹ you do importune her :
Should she kneel down, in mercy of this fact,
Her brother's ghost his paved bed would break,
And take her hence in horror.

Mar. Isabel,
Sweet Isabel, do yet but kneel by me :
Hold up your hands ; say nothing ; I 'll speak all.
They say, best men are moulded out of faults ;
And, for the most, become much more the better
For being a little bad : so may my husband.
O Isabel ! will you not lend a knee ?

Duke. He dies for Claudio's death.

Isa. Most bounteous sir,
[kneeling.]

Look, if it please you, on this man condemn'd,
As if my brother lived. I partly think,

¹ Reason and affection.

A due sincerity govern'd his deeds,
Till he did look on me : since it is so,
Let him not die. My brother had but justice,
In that he did the thing for which he died :
For Angelo,
His act did not o'ertake his bad intent ;
And must be buried but as an intent
That perish'd by the way : thoughts are no subjects ;
Intents but merely thoughts.

Mar. Merely, my lord.

Duke. Your suit's unprofitable : stand up, I say.—
I have bethought me of another fault :—
Provost, how came it, Claudio was beheaded
At an unusual hour ?

Pro. It was commanded so.

Duke. Had you a special warrant for the deed ?

Pro. No, my good lord ; it was by private mes-
sage.

Duke. For which I do discharge you of your
office :

Give up your keys.

Pro. Pardon me, noble lord :
I thought it was a fault, but knew it not ;
Yet did repent me, after more advice :¹
For testimony whereof, one in the prison,
That should by private order else have died,
I have reserved alive.

Duke. What's he ?

¹ After more mature consideration.

Pro.

His name is Barnardine.

Duke. I would thou hadst done so by Claudio.—
Go, fetch him hither : let me look upon him.[*Exit Provost.**Esc.* I am sorry, one so learned and so wise,
As you, lord Angelo, have still appear'd,
Should slip so grossly, both in the heat of blood,
And lack of temper'd judgment afterward.*Ang.* I am sorry, that such sorrow I procure :
And so deep sticks it in my penitent heart,
That I crave death more willingly than mercy :
'Tis my deserving, and I do entreat it.*Re-enter PROVOST, BARNARDINE, CLAUDIO, and JULIET.**Duke.* Which is that Barnardine ?*Pro.* This, my lord.*Duke.* There was a friar told me of this man.—
Sirrah, thou art said to have a stubborn soul,
That apprehends no farther than this world,
And squarest thy life according. Thou 'rt con-
demn'd ;
But, for those earthly faults, I quit them all ;
And pray thee, take this mercy to provide
For better times to come.—Friar, advise him ;
I leave him to your hand.—What muffled fellow 's
that ?*Pro.* This is another prisoner, that I saved,
That should have died when Claudio lost his head ;
As like almost to Claudio as himself.[*unmuffles Claudio.*

Duke. If he be like your brother, [to Isabella.]
for his sake

Is he pardon'd; and, for your lovely sake,
Give me your hand, and say you will be mine,
He is my brother too. But fitter time for that.
By this, lord Angelo perceives he's safe;
Methinks, I see a quickening in his eye.—
Well, Angelo, your evil quits¹ you well:
Look that you love your wife; her worth, worth
yours.—

I find an apt remission in myself:
And yet here's one in place I cannot pardon;—
You, sirrah, [to Lucio.] that knew me for a fool, a
coward,
One all of luxury,² an ass, a madman:
Wherein have I so deserved of you, that you
Extol me thus?

Lucio. 'Faith, my lord, I spoke it but according to
the trick.³ If you will hang me for it, you may;
but I had rather it would please you, I might be
whipped.

Duke. Whipp'd first, sir, and hang'd after.—
Proclaim it, provost, round about the city;
If any woman's wrong'd by this lewd fellow,
(As I have heard him swear himself, there's one
Whom he begot with child) let her appear,
And he shall marry her: the nuptial finish'd,
Let him be whipp'd and hang'd.

¹ Requites. ² Incontinence.

³ In joke, or thoughtlessness.

Lucio. I beseech your highness, do not marry me to a whore ! Your highness said even now, I made you a duke : good my lord, do not recompense me, in making me a cuckold.

Duke. Upon mine honor, thou shalt marry her. Thy slanders I forgive ; and therewithal Remit thy other forfeits.¹—Take him to prison, And see our pleasure herein executed.

Lucio. Marrying a punk, my lord, is pressing to death, whipping, and hanging.

Duke. Slandering a prince deserves it.— She, Claudio, that you wrong'd, look you restore.— Joy to you, Mariana !—love her, Angelo ! I have confess'd her, and I know her virtue.— Thanks, good friend Escalus, for thy much goodness :

There 's more behind, that is more gratulate.²— Thanks, provost, for thy care and secresy ; We shall employ thee in a worthier place :— Forgive him, Angelo, that brought you home The head of Ragozine for Claudio's ; The offence pardons itself.—Dear Isabel, I have a motion much imports your good ; Whereto if you 'll a willing ear incline, What 's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine.— So, bring us to our palace, where we 'll show What 's yet behind, that 's meet you all should know.

[*Exeunt.*

¹ Punishments.

² More acceptable than thanks.

COMEDY OF ERRORS.

HISTORICAL NOTICE
OF THE
COMEDY OF ERRORS.

Shakspeare appears to have taken the general plan of this comedy from a translation of the *Menæchmi* of Plautus, by W. W. i. e. (according to Wood) William Warner, in 1595, whose version of the argument is as follows:—

Two twinne-borne sons a Sicill merchant had,
Menechmus one, and Sosicles the other :
The first his father lost, a little lad ;
The grandisire namde the latter like his brother.
This, growne a man, long travell tooke to seeke
His brother, and to Epidamnum came,
Where th' other dwelt inricht, and him so like,
That citizens there take him for the same ;
Father, wife, neighbours, each mistaking either,
Much pleasant error, ere they meete together.

Perhaps the last of these lines suggested to Shakespeare the title for his piece.

'In this play,' says Mr. Steevens, 'we find more intricacy of plot than distinction of character; and our attention is less forcibly engaged, because we can guess, in great measure, how the *dénouement* will be brought about. Yet the subject appears to have been reluctantly dismissed, even in the last and unnecessary scene, where the same mistakes are continued, till they have lost the power of affording any entertainment at all.'

Dr. Drake, in defending our author from the indiscriminate censure of Steevens, observes, that 'if we consider the construction of the fable, the narrowness of its basis, and that its powers of entertainment are almost exclusively confined to a continued deception of the external senses, we must confess that Shakespeare has not only improved on the Plautian model, but, making allowance for a somewhat too coarse vein of humor, has given to his production all the interest and variety that the nature and the limits of his subject would permit.'

A R G U M E N T.

A rich merchant of Syracuse, named *Ægeon*, and a poor man of the same city, become the fathers of twin sons exactly resembling each other in feature : the children of the latter are purchased by the citizen, who bestows them on his sons as attendants. *Ægeon*, with his wife and family, shortly after visits Epidamnum ; and on their return, the ship in which they sail is split asunder by a violent storm, which separates the husband from the wife, and each of the twin brothers from their respective counterparts. *Ægeon*, with his younger son and attendant, is rescued from his perilous condition, and conveyed to Syracuse. Arrived at years of maturity, the young man is anxious to procure some intelligence of his mother and brother, and, with the consent of his father, quits his home, and at length, in company with his servant, arrives at Ephesus, where the elder Antipholus, who is separated from his mother, has long resided, in high favor with the duke, at whose desire he has united himself to a lady of fortune, who mistakes the stranger for her husband, insisting that he shall accompany her home to dinner : the real husband arrives during the repast, and finds his own doors barred against his entrance. The perplexities, arising from the confusion of the masters and their servants, induce the Syracusan youth to support himself under the influence of witchcraft, and he takes refuge in a religious house, whither his mother had retired, and had long presided as abbess. The Ephesian dame, supposing the refugee to be her husband, complains to the duke of the conduct of the abbess, who refuses to deliver him up to the custody of his wife. The simultaneous appearance of the young men and their servants now unravels the mystery. In the mean time, *Ægeon* lands at Ephesus, and is about to lose his head for a violation of the law in entering a hostile city, when he is ransomed by his son, from whom he parted at Syracuse ; and recognises, in the person of the abbess, his long-lost wife, *Æmilia*.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

SOLINUS, duke of Ephesus.

ÆGEON, a merchant of Syracuse.

ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus, { Twin brothers, and sons to
ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse, { **Ægeon** and **Æmilie**, but un-
known to each other.

DROMIO of Ephesus, { Twin brothers, and attendants on the
DROMIO of Syracuse, { two Antipholuses.

BALTHAZAR, a merchant.

ANGELO, a goldsmith.

A MERCHANT, creditor to Angelo.

PINCH, a schoolmaster and a conjurer.

ÆMILIA, wife to **Ægeon**, an abbess at Ephesus.

ADRIANA, wife to Antipholus of Ephesus.

LUCIANA, her sister.

LUCE, her servant.

A COURTEZAN.

Jailer, Officers, and other Attendants.

SCENE, Ephesus.

COMEDY OF ERRORS.

A C T I.

SCENE I.

A hall in the Duke's palace.

Enter DUKE, AEGEON, Jailer, Officers, and other Attendants.

Aegon. Proceed, Solinus, to procure my fall,
And, by the doom of death, end woes and all.

Duke. Merchant of Syracusa, plead no more.
I am not partial, to infringe our laws :
The enmity and discord, which of late
Sprung from the rancorous outrage of your duke
To merchants, our well-dealing countrymen,—
Who, wanting gilders to redeem their lives,
Have seal'd his rigorous statutes with their bloods,—
Excludes all pity from our threatening looks :
For, since the mortal and intestine jars
'Twixt thy seditious countrymen and us,
It hath in solemn synods been decreed,
Both by the Syracusians and ourselves,
To admit no traffic to our adverse towns :
Nay, more ; if any, born at Ephesus, be seen
At any Syracusan marts and fairs ;
Again, if any, Syracusan born,

Come to the bay of Ephesus, he dies,
His goods confiscate to the duke's dispose ;
Unless a thousand marks be levied,
To quit the penalty, and to ransom him.
Thy substance, valued at the highest rate,
Cannot amount unto a hundred marks ;
Therefore, by law thou art condemn'd to die.

Aegeon. Yet this my comfort; when your words
are done,
My woes end likewise with the evening sun.

Duke. Well, Syracusian, say, in brief, the cause
Why thou departedst from thy native home ;
And for what cause thou camest to Ephesus.

Aegeon. A heavier task could not have been
imposed,
Than I to speak my griefs unspeakable :
Yet, that the world may witness, that my end
Was wrought by nature, not by vile offence,¹
I 'll utter what my sorrow gives me leave.
In Syracusa was I born ; and wed
Unto a woman, happy but for me,
And by me too, had not our hap been bad.
With her I lived in joy ; our wealth increased,
By prosperous voyages I often made
To Epidamnum ; till my factor's death,
And the great care of goods at random left,
Drew me from kind embracements of my spouse,
From whom my absence was not six months old,

¹ Not by any criminal act, but by natural affection.

Before herself (almost at fainting, under
The pleasing punishment that women bear)
Had made provision for her following me,
And soon, and safe, arrived where I was.
There had she not been long, but she became
A joyful mother of two goodly sons ;
And, which was strange, the one so like the other,
As could not be distinguish'd but by names.
That very hour, and in the self-same inn,
A poor mean woman was delivered
Of such a burden, male twins, both alike :
Those, for their parents were exceeding poor,
I bought, and brought up to attend my sons.
My wife, not meanly proud of two such boys,
Made daily motions for our home return :
Unwilling I agreed ; alas, too soon.
We came aboard :
A league from Epidamnum had we sail'd,
Before the always-wind-obeying deep
Gave any tragic instance of our harm :
But longer did we not retain much hope ;
For what obscured light the heavens did grant,
Did but convey unto our fearful minds
A doubtful warrant of immediate death ;
Which, though myself would gladly have embraced,
Yet the incessant weepings of my wife,
Weeping before for what she saw must come,
And piteous plainings of the pretty babes,
That mourn'd for fashion, ignorant what to fear,
Forced me to seek delays for them and me.
And this it was,—for other means was none.—

The sailors sought for safety by our boat,
And left the ship, then sinking-ripe, to us :
My wife, more careful for the latter-born,
Had fasten'd him unto a small spare mast,
Such as sea-faring men provide for storms ;
To him one of the other twins was bound,
Whilst I had been like heedful of the other.
The children thus disposed, my wife and I,
Fixing our eyes on whom our care was fix'd,
Fasten'd ourselves at either end the mast ;
And floating straight, obedient to the stream,
Were carried towards Corinth, as we thought.
At length, the sun, gazing upon the earth,
Dispersed those vapors that offended us ;
And, by the benefit of his wish'd light,
The seas wax'd calm, and we discovered
Two ships from far making amain¹ to us,
Of Corinth that, of Epidaurus this :
But ere they came,—O, let me say no more !
Gather the sequel by that went before.

Duke. Nay, forward, old man ; do not break
off so ;

For we may pity, though not pardon thee.

Aegeon. O, had the gods done so, I had not now
Worthily term'd them merciless to us !
For, ere the ships could meet by twice five leagues,
We were encounter'd by a mighty rock ;
Which being violently borne upon,

¹ With vigor.

Our helpful ship was splitted in the midst ;
So that, in this unjust divorce of us,
Fortune had left to both of us alike
What to delight in, what to sorrow for.
Her part, poor soul ! seeming as burdened
With lesser weight, but not with lesser woe,
Was carried with more speed before the wind ;
And in our sight they three were taken up
By fishermen of Corinth, as we thought.
At length, another ship had seised on us ;
And, knowing whom it was their hap to save,
Gave helpful welcome to their shipwreck'd guests ;
And would have reft¹ the fishers of their prey,
Had not their bark been very slow of sail,
And therefore homeward did they bend their
course.—

Thus have you heard me sever'd from my bliss ;
That by misfortunes was my life prolong'd,
To tell sad stories of my own mishaps.

Duke. And, for the sake of them thou sorrowest
for,
Do me the favor to dilate at full
What hath befallen of them, and thee, till now.

Egeon. My youngest boy, and yet my eldest care,
At eighteen years became inquisitive
After his brother ; and importuned me,
That his attendant (so his case was like,
Reft of his brother, but retain'd his name)

¹ Deprived, bereft.

Might bear him company in the quest of him :
Whom whilst I labor'd of a love to see,
I hazarded the loss of whom I loved.
Five summers have I spent in farthest Greece,
Roaming clean¹ through the bounds of Asia,
And, coasting homeward, came to Ephesus ;
Hopeless to find, yet loath to leave unsought,
Or that, or any place that harbors men.
But here must end the story of my life ;
And happy were I in my timely death,
Could all my travels warrant me they live.

Duke. Hapless Ægeon, whom the fates have
mark'd

To bear the extremity of dire mishap !
Now, trust me, were it not against our laws,
Against my crown, my oath, my dignity,
Which princes, would they, may not disannul,
My soul should sue as advocate for thee.
But, though thou art adjudged to the death,
And passed sentence may not be recall'd,
But to our honor's great disparagement,
Yet will I favor thee in what I can :
Therefore, merchant, I'll limit thee this day,
To seek thy help by beneficial help :
Try all the friends thou hast in Ephesus ;
Beg thou, or borrow, to make up the sum,
And live ; if no, then thou art doom'd to die.—
Jailer, take him to thy custody.

¹ Quite.

Jailer. I will, my lord.

Aegeon. Hopeless, and helpless, doth *Aegeon* wend,¹

But to procrastinate his lifeless end. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

A public place.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS and DROMIO OF SYRACUSE, and a MERCHANT.

Mer. Therefore, give out, you are of Epidamnum,
Lest that your goods too soon be confiscate.
This very day, a Syracusan merchant
Is apprehended for arrival here;
And, not being able to buy out his life,
According to the statute of the town,
Dies ere the weary sun set in the west.
There is your money that I had to keep.

Ant. S. Go, bear it to the Centaur, where we host,
And stay there, Dromio, till I come to thee.
Within this hour it will be dinner-time:
Till that, I'll view the manners of the town,
Peruse the traders, gaze upon the buildings,
And then return, and sleep within mine inn;
For with long travel I am stiff and weary.
Get thee away.

¹ Go.

Dro. S. Many a man would take you at your word,
And go indeed, having so good a mean.

[*Exit Dromio S.*]

Ant. S. A trusty villain,¹ sir ; that very oft,
When I am dull with care and melancholy,
Lightens my humor with his merry jests.
What, will you walk with me about the town,
And then go to my inn, and dine with me ?

Mer. I am invited, sir, to certain merchants,
Of whom I hope to make much benefit.
I crave your pardon. Soon, at five o'clock,
Please you, I 'll meet with you upon the mart,
And afterwards consort you till bed-time.
My present business calls me from you now.

Ant. S. Farewell till then. I will go lose myself,
And wander up and down, to view the city.

Mer. Sir, I commend you to your own content.

[*Exit Merchant.*]

Ant. S. He that commends me to mine own content,
Commends me to the thing I cannot get.
I to the world am like a drop of water,
That in the ocean seeks another drop ;
Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,
Unseen, inquisitive, confounds ² himself :
So I, to find a mother and a brother,
In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself.

¹ Servant.

² Destroys.

Enter DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Here comes the almanac of my true date.—¹
What now? How chance, thou art return'd so soon?
Dro. E. Return'd so soon! rather approach'd too
late:

The capon burns, the pig falls from the spit;
The clock hath stricken twelve upon the bell,
My mistress made it one upon my cheek:
She is so hot, because the meat is cold;
The meat is cold, because you come not home;
You come not home, because you have no stomach;
You have no stomach, having broke your fast;
But we, that know what 'tis to fast and pray,
Are penitent for your default to-day.

Ant. S. Stop in your wind, sir; tell me this, I
pray;
Where have you left the money that I gave you?
Dro. E. O,—sixpence, that I had o' Wednesday
last,

To pay the saddler for my mistress' crupper;—
The saddler had it, sir; I kept it not.

Ant. S. I am not in a sportive humor now:
Tell me, and dally not, where is the money?
We being strangers here, how darest thou trust
So great a charge from thine own custody?

Dro. E. I pray you, jest, sir, as you sit at dinner:
I from my mistress come to you in post;

¹ Because they were both born in the same hour.

If I return, I shall be post indeed ;
For she will score your fault upon my pate.
Methinks, your maw, like mine, should be your
clock,
And strike you home without a measenger.

Ant. S. Come, Dromio, come, these jests are out
of season :

Reserve them for a merrier hour than this.
Where is the gold I gave in charge to thee ?

Dro. E. To me, sir ? why, you gave no gold
to me.

Ant. S. Come on, sir knave, have done your
foolishness,

And tell me how thou hast disposed thy charge.

Dro. E. My charge was but to fetch you from
the mart

Home to your house, the Phœnix, sir, to dinner :
My mistress and her sister stay for you.

Ant. S. Now, as I am a christian, answer me,
In what safe place you have bestow'd my money ;
Or I shall break that merry sconce ¹ of yours,
That stands on tricks when I am undisposed.
Where is the thousand marks thou hadst of me ?

Dro. E. I have some marks of yours upon my
pate,
Some of my mistress' marks upon my shoulders,
But not a thousand marks between you both.—
If I should pay your worship those again,

¹ Head.

Perchance, you will not bear them patiently.

Ant. S. Thy mistress' marks ! what mistress,
slave, hast thou ?

Dro. E. Your worship's wife, my mistress at the
Phoenix ;

She that doth fast till you come home to dinner,
And prays that you will hie you home to dinner.

Ant. S. What, wilt thou flout me thus unto my
face,

Being forbid ? There, take you that, sir knave.

[*strikes Dromio E.*

Dro. E. What mean you, sir ? for God's sake,
hold your hands :

Nay, an you will not, sir, I 'll take my heels.

[*Exit Dromio E.*

Ant. S. Upon my life, by some device or other,
The villain is o'er-raught¹ of all my money.

They say, this town is full of cozenage ;

As, nimble jugglers, that deceive the eye ;

Dark-working sorcerers, that change the mind ;

Soul-killing witches, that deform the body ;

Disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks,

And many such like liberties of sin :²

If it prove so, I will be gone the sooner.

I 'll to the Centaur, to go seek this slave :

I greatly fear, my money is not safe.

[*Exit.*

¹ Over-reached.

² Licensed sins.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

*A public place.**Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA.*

Adr. Neither my husband, nor the slave return'd,
That in such haste I sent to seek his master !
Sure, Luciana, it is two o'clock.

Luc. Perhaps, some merchant hath invited him,
And from the mart he's somewhere gone to dinner.
Good sister, let us dine, and never fret :
A man is master of his liberty :
Time is their master ; and, when they see time,
They'll go, or come : if so, be patient, sister.

Adr. Why should their liberty than ours be more ?
Luc. Because their business still lies out o' door.
Adr. Look, when I serve him so, he takes it ill.
Luc. O, know, he is the bridle of your will.
Adr. There's none, but asses, will be bridled so.
Luc. Why, headstrong liberty is lash'd with woe.
There's nothing, situate under heaven's eye,
But hath his bound, in earth, in sea, in sky :
The beasts, the fishes, and the winged fowls,
Are their males' subjects, and at their controls :
Men, more divine, the masters of all these,
Lords of the wide world and wild watery seas,
Endued with intellectual sense and souls,
Of more pre-eminence than fish and fowls,

Are masters to their females, and their lords :
Then let your will attend on their accords.

Adr. This servitude makes you to keep unwed.

Luc. Not this, but troubles of the marriage bed.

Adr. But, were you wedded, you would bear some sway.

Luc. Ere I learn love, I 'll practise to obey.

Adr. How if your husband start some other where ?

Luc. Till he come home again, I would forbear.

Adr. Patience, unmoved, no marvel though she pause ; ¹

They can be meek, that have no other cause.

A wretched soul, bruised with adversity,

We bid be quiet, when we hear it cry ;

But were we burden'd with like weight of pain,

As much, or more, we should ourselves complain :

So thou, that hast no unkind mate to grieve thee,

With urging helpless patience wouldst relieve me :

But, if thou live to see like right bereft,

This fool-begg'd patience in thee will be left.

Luc. Well, I will marry one day, but to try.—
Here comes your man ; now is your husband nigh.

Enter DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Adr. Say, is your tardy master now at hand ?

Dro. E. Nay, he is at two hands with me, and that my two ears can witness.

¹ Is quiet.

Adr. Say, didst thou speak with him? know'st thou his mind?

Dro. E. Ay, ay, he told his mind upon mine ear. Beshrew his hand, I scarce could understand it.

Luc. Spake he so doubtfully, thou couldst not feel his meaning?

Dro. E. Nay, he struck so plainly, I could too well feel his blows; and withal so doubtfully, that I could scarce understand them.¹

Adr. But say, I pr'ythee, is he coming home? It seems, he hath great care to please his wife.

Dro. E. Why, mistress, sure my master is horn-mad.

Adr. Horn-mad, thou villain?

Dro. E. I mean not cuckold-mad; but, sure, he is stark mad.

When I desired him to come home to dinner,
He ask'd me for a thousand marks in gold:
'Tis dinner time,' quoth I; 'My gold,' quoth he:
'Your meat doth burn,' quoth I; 'My gold,' quoth he:
'Will you come home?' quoth I; 'My gold,' quoth he:
'Where is the thousand marks I gave thee, villain?'
'The pig,' quoth I, 'is burn'd;' 'My gold,' quoth he:
'My mistress, sir,' quoth I; 'Hang up thy mistress:
I know not thy mistress; out on thy mistress!'

Luc. Quoth who?

Dro. E. Quoth my master:

¹ I could scarce stand under them.

'I know,' quoth he, 'no house, no wife, no mistress :—'

So that my errand, due unto my tongue,
I thank him, I bear home upon my shoulders;
For, in conclusion, he did beat me there.

Adr. Go back again, thou slave, and fetch him home.

Dro. E. Go back again, and be new beaten home ?
For God's sake, send some other messenger.

Adr. Back, slave, or I will break thy pate across.

Dro. E. And he will bless that cross with other beating :

Between you I shall have a holy head.

Adr. Hence, prating peasant; fetch thy master home.

Dro. E. Am I so round with you, as you with me,
That like a football you do spurn me thus ?
You spurn me hence, and he will spurn me hither :
If I last in this service, you must case me in leather.

[*Exit.*]

Luc. Fie, how impatience lowereth in your face !

Adr. His company must do his minions grace,
Whilst I at home starve for a merry look.
Hath homely age the alluring beauty took
From my poor cheek ? then he hath wasted it :
Are my discourses dull ? barren my wit ?
If voluble and sharp discourse be marr'd,
Unkindness blunts it, more than marble hard.
Do their gay vestments his affections bait ?
That's not my fault ; he's master of my state.
What ruins are in me, that can be found

By him not ruin'd ? then is he the ground
 Of my defeatures.¹ My decayed fair²
 A sunny look of his would soon repair :
 But, too unruly deer, he breaks the pale,
 And feeds from home : poor I am but his stale.³

Luc. Self-harming jealousy !—fie, beat it hence.

Adr. Unfeeling fools can with such wrongs dis-
 pense.

I know his eye doth homage otherwhere ;
 Or else, what lets⁴ it but he would be here ?
 Sister, you know, he promised me a chain ;—
 Would that alone alone he would detain,
 So he would keep fair quarter with his bed !
 I see, the jewel, best enamelled,
 Will lose his beauty ; and though gold 'bides still
 That others touch, yet often touching will
 Wear gold : and no man, that hath a name,
 But falsehood and corruption doth it shame.
 Since that my beauty cannot please his eye,
 I'll weep what's left away, and weeping die.

Luc. How many fond fools serve mad jealousy !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The same.

Enter ANTIPOHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Ant. S. The gold, I gave to Dromio, is laid up
 Safe at the Centaur ; and the heedful slave

¹ Alteration of features.
² Stalking-horse.

³ Fair, for fairness.
⁴ Hinders.

Is wander'd forth, in care to seek me out.
By computation, and mine host's report,
I could not speak with Dromio, since at first
I sent him from the mart. See, here he comes.

Enter DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

How now, sir? is your merry humor alter'd?
As you love strokes, so jest with me again.
You know no Centaur? you received no gold?
Your mistress sent to have me home to dinner?
My house was at the Phoenix? Wast thou mad,
That thus so madly thou didst answer me?

Dro. S. What answer, sir? when spake I such a word?

Ant. S. Even now, even here, not half an hour since.

Dro. S. I did not see you since you sent me hence,

Home to the Centaur, with the gold you gave me.

Ant. S. Villain, thou didst deny the gold's receipt;
And told'st me of a mistress, and a dinner;
For which, I hope, thou felt'st I was displeased.

Dro. S. I am glad to see you in this merry vein.
What means this jest? I pray you, master, tell me.

Ant. S. Yea, dost thou jeer, and flout me in the teeth?

Think'st thou, I jest? Hold, take thou that, and that. [beating him.]

Dro. S. Hold, sir, for God's sake: now your jest is earnest:

Upon what bargain do you give it me?

Ant. S. Because that I familiarly sometimes
Do use you for my fool, and chat with you,
Your sauciness will jest upon my love,
And make a common of my serious hours.¹
When the sun shines, let foolish gnats make
sport,
But creep in crannies when he hides his beams.
If you will jest with me, know my aspect,²
And fashion your demeanor to my looks,
Or I will beat this method in your sconce.

Dro. S. Sconce, call you it? so you would leave
battering, I had rather have it a head: an you use
these blows long, I must get a sconce for my head,
and ensconce it too;³ or else I shall seek my wit in
my shoulders. But, I pray, sir, why am I beaten?

Ant. S. Dost thou not know?

Dro. S. Nothing, sir; but that I am beaten.

Ant. S. Shall I tell you why?

Dro. S. Ay, sir, and wherefore; for, they say,
every why hath a wherefore.

Ant. S. Why, first,—for flouting me; and then,
wherefore,—for urging it the second time to me.

Dro. S. Was there ever any man thus beaten out
of season?

When, in the why and the wherefore is neither
rhyme nor reason?—

Well, sir, I thank you.

¹ Intrude on them when you please.

² Study my countenance.

³ A sconce was a petty fortification.

Ant. S. Thank me, sir? for what?

Dro. S. Marry, sir, for this something that you gave me for nothing.

Ant. S. I'll make you amends next, to give you nothing for something. But say, sir, is it dinner-time?

Dro. S. No, sir; I think, the meat wants that I have.

Ant. S. In good time, sir, what's that?

Dro. S. Basting.

Ant. S. Well, sir, then 'twill be dry.

Dro. S. If it be, sir, I pray you, eat none of it.

Ant. S. Your reason?

Dro. S. Lest it make you choleric, and purchase me another dry basting.

Ant. S. Well, sir, learn to jest in good time. There's a time for all things.

Dro. S. I durst have denied that, before you were so choleric.

Ant. S. By what rule, sir?

Dro. S. Marry, sir, by a rule as plain as the plain bald pate of father Time himself.

Ant. S. Let's hear it.

Dro. S. There's no time for a man to recover his hair, that grows bald by nature.

Ant. S. May he not do it by fine and recovery?

Dro. S. Yes, to pay a fine for a periwig, and recover the lost hair of another man.

Ant. S. Why is Time such a niggard of hair, being, as it is, so plentiful an excrement?

Dro. S. Because it is a blessing that he bestows on beasts: and what he hath scanted men in hair, he hath given them in wit.

Ant. S. Why, but there's many a man hath more hair than wit.

Dro. S. Not a man of those, but he hath the wit to lose his hair.

Ant. S. Why, thou didst conclude hairy men plain dealers without wit.

Dro. S. The plainer dealer, the sooner lost: yet he loseth it in a kind of jollity.

Ant. S. For what reason?

Dro. S. For two; and sound ones too.

Ant. S. Nay, not sound, I pray you.

Dro. S. Sure ones then.

Ant. S. Nay, not sure, in a thing falsing.

Dro. S. Certain ones then.

Ant. S. Name them.

Dro. S. The one, to save the money that he spends in tiring; the other, that at dinner they should not drop in his porridge.

Ant. S. You would all this time have proved, there is no time for all things.

Dro. S. Marry, and did, sir; namely, ev'n no time to recover hair lost by nature.

Ant. S. But your reason was not substantial, why there is no time to recover.

Dro. S. Thus I mend it: Time himself is bald, and therefore, to the world's end, will have bald followers.

Ant. S. I knew, 'twould be a bald conclusion :
But soft ! who wafts¹ us yonder ?

Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA.

Adr. Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange, and frown ;
Some other mistress hath thy sweet aspects :
I am not Adriana, nor thy wife.
The time was once, when thou unurged wouldest vow,
That never words were music to thine ear,
That never object pleasing in thine eye,
That never touch well-welcome to thy hand,
That never meat sweet-savor'd in thy taste,
Unless I spake, or look'd, or touch'd, or carved to
thee.

How comes it now, my husband, O, how comes it,
That thou art then estranged from thyself ?
Thyself I call it, being strange to me,
That, undividable, incorporate,
Am better than thy dear self's better part.
Ah, do not tear away thyself from me ;
For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall
A drop of water in the breaking gulph,
And take unmingleth thence that drop again,
Without addition or diminishing,
As take from me thyself, and not me too.
How dearly would it touch thee to the quick,
Shouldst thou but hear I were licentious ;
And that this body, consecrate to thee,

¹ Beckons.

By ruffian lust should be contaminate !
Wouldst thou not spit at me, and spurn at me,
And hurl the name of husband in my face,
And tear the stain'd skin off my harlot brow,
And from my false hand cut the wedding ring,
And break it with a deep-divorcing vow ?
I know thou canst ; and therefore, see, thou do it.
I am possess'd with an adulterate blot ;
My blood is mingled with the crime of lust :
For, if we two be one, and thou play false,
I do digest the poison of thy flesh,
Being strumpeted by thy contagion.
Keep then fair league and truce with thy true
bed ;
I live dis-stain'd, thou undishonored.

Ant. S. Plead you to me, fair dame ? I know you
not :

In Ephesus I am but two hours old,
As strange unto your town as to your talk ;
Who, every word by all my wit being scann'd,
Want wit in all one word to understand.

Luc. Fie, brother ! how the world is changed
with you !

When were you wont to use my sister thus ?
She sent for you by Dromio home to dinner.

Ant. S. By Dromio ?

Dro. S. By me ?

Adr. By thee : and this thou didst return from
him ;—

That he did buffet thee, and, in his blows,
Denied my house for his, me for his wife.

Ant. S. Did you converse, sir, with this gentlewoman?

What is the course and drift of your compact?

Dro. S. I, sir? I never saw her till this time.

Ant. S. Villain, thou liest; for even her very words

Didst thou deliver to me on the mart.

Dro. S. I never spake with her in all my life.

Ant. S. How can she thus then call us by our names,

Unless it be by inspiration?

Adr. How ill agrees it with your gravity,
To counterfeit thus grossly with your slave,
Abetting him to thwart me in my mood?
Be it my wrong, you are from me exempt,
But wrong not that wrong with a more contempt.
Come, I will fasten on this sleeve of thine:
Thou art an elm, my husband, I a vine;
Whose weakness, married to thy stronger state,
Makes me with thy strength to communicate:
If aught possess thee from me, it is dross,
Usurping ivy, brier, or idle¹ moss;
Who, all for want of pruning, with intrusion
Infect thy sap, and live on thy confusion.

Ant. S. To me she speaks; she moves me for her theme:

What, was I married to her in my dream,

¹ Unfruitful.

Or sleep I now, and think I hear all this?
What error drives our eyes and ears amiss?
Until I know this sure uncertainty,
I'll entertain the offer'd fallacy.

Luc. Dromio, go bid the servants spread for dinner.

Dro. S. O, for my beads! I cross me for a sinner.
This is the fairy land;—O, spite of spites!—
We talk with goblins, owls, and elvish sprites:
If we obey them not, this will ensue;
They'll suck our breath, or pinch us black and blue.

Luc. Why protestest thou to thyself, and answer'st not?

Dromio, thou drone, thou snail, thou slug, thou sot!

Dro. S. I am transformed, master; am not I?

Ant. S. I think thou art in mind, and so am I.

Dro. S. Nay, master, both in mind and in my shape.

Ant. S. Thou hast thine own form.

Dro. S. No, I am an ape.

Luc. If thou art changed to aught, 'tis to an ass.

Dro. S. 'Tis true; she rides me, and I long for grass.

'Tis so, I am an ass; else it could never be,
But I should know her as well as she knows me.

Adr. Come, come, no longer will I be a fool,
To put the finger in the eye and weep,
Whilst man and master laugh my woes to scorn.—
Come, sir, to dinner. Dromio, keep the gate.—
Husband, I'll dine above with you to-day,

And shrive you¹ of a thousand idle pranks.
Sirrah, if any ask you for your master,
Say, he dines forth, and let no creature enter.—
Come, sister :—Dromio, play the porter well.

Ant. S. Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell?
Sleeping or waking, mad or well-advised?
Known unto these, and to myself disguised?
I'll say as they say, and persever so,
And in this mist at all adventures go.

Dro. S. Master, shall I be porter at the gate?

Adr. Ay; and let none enter, lest I break your
pate.

Luc. Come, come, Antipholus; we dine too late.

[*Exeunt.*]

A C T I I I.

SCENE I.

The same.

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS, DROMIO OF EPHESUS,
ANGELO, and BALTHAZAR.*

Ant. E. Good signior Angelo, you must excuse
us all;
My wife is shrewish, when I keep not hours.
Say, that I linger'd with you at your shop,
To see the making of her carkanet,²

¹ Call you to confession.

² A necklace strung with pearls.

And that to-morrow you will bring it home.
But here's a villain, that would face me down
He met me on the mart; and that I beat him,
And charged him with a thousand marks in gold;
And that I did deny my wife and house.—
Thou drunkard, thou, what didst thou mean by
this?

Dro. E. Say what you will, sir, but I know what
I know:

That you beat me at the mart, I have your hand to
show:
If the skin were parchment, and the blows you gave
were ink,
Your own handwriting would tell you what I think.

Ant. E. I think, thou art an ass.

Dro. E. Marry, so it doth appear
By the wrongs I suffer, and the blows I bear.
I should kick, being kick'd; and, being at that
pass,
You would keep from my heels, and beware of an
ass.

Ant. E. You are sad, signior Balthazar. Pray
God, our cheer
May answer my good will, and your good welcome
here.

Bal. I hold your dainties cheap, sir, and your
welcome dear.

Ant. E. O signior Balthazar, either at flesh or
fish,
A table full of welcome makes scarce one dainty
dish.

Bal. Good meat, sir, is common ; that every churl affords.

Ant. E. And welcome more common ; for that's nothing but words.

Bal. Small cheer, and great welcome, makes a merry feast.

Ant. E. Ay, to a niggardly host, and more sparing guest :

But though my cates be mean, take them in good part;

Better cheer may you have, but not with better heart.

But, soft; my door is lock'd; go, bid them let us in.

Dro. E. Maud, Bridget, Marian, Cicely, Gillian, Jen' !

Dro. S. [within.] Mome,¹ malt-horse, capon, coxcomb, idiot, patch !²

Either get thee from the door, or sit down at the hatch :

Dost thou conjure for wenches, that thou call'st for such store,

When one is one too many ? Go, get thee from the door.

Dro. E. What patch is made our porter ? My master stays in the street.

Dro. S. Let him walk from whence he came, lest he catch cold on 's feet.

¹ Blockhead.

² Fool.

Ant. E. Who talks within there? ho, open the door.

Dro. S. Right, sir, I 'll tell you when, and you 'll tell me wherefore.

Ant. E. Wherefore? for my dinner; I have not dined to-day.

Dro. S. Nor to-day here you must not; come again, when you may.

Ant. E. What art thou, that keep'st me out from the house I owe?¹

Dro. S. The porter for this time, sir, and my name is Dromio.

Dro. E. O villain, thou hast stolen both mine office and my name;

The one ne'er got me credit, the other mickle blame.
If thou hadst been Dromio to-day in my place,
Thou wouldst have changed thy face for a name, or
thy name for an ass.

Luce. [within.] What a coil² is there! Dromio,
who are those at the gate?

Dro. E. Let my master in, Luce.

Luce. Faith, no; he comes too late;
And so tell your master.

Dro. E. O Lord, I must laugh:—
Have at you with a proverb.—Shall I set in my staff?

Luce. Have at you with another: that's,—
When? can you tell?

Dro. S. If thy name be call'd Luce, Luce, thou hast answer'd him well.

¹ I own, am master of.

² Tumult.

Ant. E. Do you hear, you minion ? you 'll let us
in, I hope ?

Luce. I thought to have ask'd you.

Dro. S. And you said, no.

Dro. E. So, come, help ; well struck ; there was
blow for blow.

Ant. E. Thou baggage, let me in.

Luce. Can you tell for whose sake ?

Dro. E. Master, knock the door hard.

Luce. Let him knock till it ake.

Ant. E. You 'll cry for this, minion, if I beat the
door down.

Luce. What needs all that, and a pair of stocks in
the town ?

Adr. [within.] Who is that at the door, that
keeps all this noise ?

Dro. S. By my troth, your town is troubled with
unruly boys.

Ant. E. Are you there, wife ? you might have
come before.

Adr. Your wife, sir knave ! go, get you from
the door.

Dro. E. If you went in pain, master, this knave
would go sore.

Ang. Here is neither cheer, sir, nor welcome ; we
would fain have either.

Bal. In debating which was best, we shall part¹
with neither.

¹ Have part.

Dro. E. They stand at the door, master ; bid them welcome hither.

Ant. E. There is something in the wind, that we cannot get in.

Dro. E. You would say so, master, if your garments were thin.

Your cake here is warm within ; you stand here in the cold :

It would make a man mad as a buck, to be so bought and sold.¹

Ant. E. Go, fetch me something : I 'll break ope the gate.

Dro. S. Break any breaking here, and I 'll break your knave's pate.

Dro. E. A man may break a word with you, sir ; and words are but wind ;

Ay, and break it in your face, so he break it not behind.

Dro. S. It seems, thou wantest breaking ! Out upon thee, hind !

Dro. E. Here 's too much, out upon thee ! I pray thee, let me in.

Dro. S. Ay, when fowls have no feathers, and fish have no fin.

Ant. E. Well, I 'll break in. Go, borrow me a crow.

Dro. E. A crow without feather ; master, mean you so ?

¹ Over-reached by foul and secret practices. A proverbial expression.

For a fish without a fin, there's a fowl without a feather;
If a crow help us in, sirrah, we'll pluck a crow together.

Ant. E. Go, get thee gone: fetch me an iron crow.

Bal. Have patience, sir: O, let it not be so;
Herein you war against your reputation,
And draw within the compass of suspect
The unviolated honor of your wife.
Once¹ this:—Your long experience of her wisdom,
Her sober virtue, years, and modesty,
Plead on her part some cause to you unknown;
And doubt not, sir, but she will well excuse
Why at this time the doors are made² against you.
Be ruled by me; depart in patience,
And let us to the Tiger all to dinner:
And, about evening, come yourself alone,
To know the reason of this strange restraint.
If by strong hand you offer to break in,
Now in the stirring passage of the day,
A vulgar comment will be made of it;
And that supposed by the common rout
Against your yet ungalled estimation,
That may with foul intrusion enter in,
And dwell upon your grave when you are dead:
For slander lives upon succession;
For ever housed where it gets possession.

¹ Once for all.

² Made fast, barred.

Ant. E. You have prevail'd; I will depart in quiet,
 And, in despite of mirth, mean to be merry.
 I know a wench of excellent discourse,—
 Pretty and witty; wild, and, yet too, gentle;—
 There will we dine: this woman that I mean,
 My wife (but, I protest, without desert)
 Hath oftentimes upbraided me withal:
 To her will we to dinner.—Get you home,
 And fetch the chain; by this, I know, 'tis made:
 Bring it, I pray you, to the Porcupine;
 For there's the house: that chain will I bestow
 (Be it for nothing but to spite my wife)
 Upon mine hostess there: good sir, make haste.
 Since mine own doors refuse to entertain me,
 I'll knock elsewhere, to see if they'll disdain me.

Ang. I'll meet you at that place some hour hence.

Ant. E. Do so; this jest shall cost me some expense. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

*The same.**Enter LUCIANA and ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.*

Luc. And may it be that you have quite forgot
 A husband's office? shall, Antipholus,
 Even in the spring of love, thy love-springs¹ rot?
 Shall love, in building, grow so ruinous?

¹ Young plants or shoots of love.

If you did wed my sister for her wealth,
Then, for her wealth's sake, use her with more
kindness :
Or, if you like elsewhere, do it by stealth ;
Muffle your false love with some show of blind-
ness :
Let not my sister read it in your eye ;
Be not thy tongue thy own shame's orator ;
Look sweet, speak fair, become disloyalty ;
Apparel vice like virtue's harbinger :
Bear a fair presence, though your heart be tainted ;
Teach sin the carriage of a holy saint ;
Be secret-false. What need she be acquainted ?
What simple thief brags of his own attaint ?
'Tis double wrong, to truant with your bed,
And let her read it in thy looks at board :
Shame hath a bastard fame, well managed ;
Ill deeds are doubled with an evil word.
Alas, poor women ! make us but believe,
Being compact of credit,¹ that you love us ;
Though others have the arm, show us the sleeve ;
We in your motion turn, and you may move us.
Then, gentle brother, get you in again ;
Comfort my sister, cheer her, call her wife :
'Tis holy sport, to be a little vain,²
When the sweet breath of flattery conquers strife.

*Ant. S. Sweet mistress, (what your name is else,
I know not,*

¹ Being made altogether of credulity. ² Light of tongue.

Nor by what wonder you do hit on mine)
Less, in your knowlege and your grace, you show
not,

Than our earth's wonder; more than earth divine.
Teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak;

Lay open to my earthly gross conceit,
Smother'd in errors, feeble, shallow, weak,

The folded meaning of your words' deceit.
Against my soul's pure truth why labor you,
To make it wander in an unknown field?
Are you a god? would you create me new?

Transform me then, and to your power I'll
yield.

But if that I am I, then well I know,

Your weeping sister is no wife of mine,
Nor to her bed no homage do I owe;

Far more, far more, to you do I decline.
O, train me not, sweet mermaid, with thy note,
To drown me in thy sister's flood of tears:
Sing, siren, for thyself, and I will dote:

Spread o'er the silver waves thy golden hairs,
And as a bed I'll take thee, and there lie;

And, in that glorious supposition, think
He gains by death, that hath such means to die:—

Let love, being light, be drowned if she sink!
Luc. What, are you mad, that you do reason so?
Ant. S. Not mad, but mated;¹ how, I do not
know.

¹ Confounded.

Luc. It is a fault that springeth from your eye.

Ant. S. For gazing on your beams, fair sun,
being by.

Luc. Gaze where you should, and that will clear
your sight.

Ant. S. As good to wink, sweet love, as look on
night.

Luc. Why call you me love? call my sister so.

Ant. S. Thy sister's sister.

Luc. That's my sister.

Ant. S. No;

It is thyself, mine own self's better part;
Mine eye's clear eye, my dear heart's dearer heart;
My food, my fortune, and my sweet hope's aim,
My sole earth's heaven, and my heaven's claim.¹

Luc. All this my sister is, or else should be.

Ant. S. Call thyself sister, sweet, for I aim thee:
Thee will I love, and with thee lead my life:
Thou hast no husband yet, nor I no wife:
Give me thy hand.

Luc. O, soft, sir, hold you still;
I'll fetch my sister, to get her good will.

[*Exit Luc.*

*Enter, from the house of ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS,
DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.*

Ant. S. Why, how now, Dromio? where run'st
thou so fast?

¹ All the happiness that I wish for on earth, and all that I
claim from heaven hereafter.

Dro. S. Do you know me, sir? am I Dromio? am I your man? am I myself?

Ant. S. Thou art Dromio, thou art my man, thou art thyself.

Dro. S. I am an ass, I am a woman's man, and besides myself.

Ant. S. What woman's man? and how besides thyself?

Dro. S. Marry, sir, besides myself, I am due to a woman; one that claims me, one that haunts me, one that will have me.

Ant. S. What claim lays she to thee?

Dro. S. Marry, sir, such claim as you would lay to your horse; and she would have me as a beast: not that, I being a beast, she would have me; but that she, being a very beastly creature, lays claim to me.

Ant. S. What is she?

Dro. S. A very reverend body; ay, such a one as a man may not speak of, without he say, sir-reverence: I have but lean luck in the match, and yet is she a wondrous fat marriage.

Ant. S. How dost thou mean, a fat marriage?

Dro. S. Marry, sir, she 's the kitchen-wench, and all grease; and I know not what use to put her to, but to make a lamp of her, and run from her by her own light. I warrant, her rags, and the tallow in them, will burn a Poland winter: if she lives till doomsday, she 'll burn a week longer than the whole world.

Ant. S. What complexion is she of?

Dro. S. Swart, like my shoe, but her face nothing like so clean kept; for why? she sweats: a man may go over shoes in the grime of it.

Ant. S. That's a fault that water will mend.

Dro. S. No, sir, 'tis in grain; Noah's flood could not do it.

Ant. S. What's her name?

Dro. S. Nell, sir;—but her name and three quarters, that is, an ell and three quarters, will not measure her from hip to hip.

Ant. S. Then she bears some breadth?

Dro. S. No longer from head to foot, than from hip to hip: she is spherical, like a globe: I could find out countries in her.

Ant. S. In what part of her body stands Ireland?

Dro. S. Marry, sir, in her buttocks; I found it out by the bogs.

Ant. S. Where Scotland?

Dro. S. I found it by the barrenness; hard, in the palm of the hand.

Ant. S. Where France?

Dro. S. In her forehead; armed and reverted, making war against her heir.

Ant. S. Where England?

Dro. S. I looked for the chalky cliffs, but I could find no whiteness in them: but I guess, it stood in her chin, by the salt rheum that ran between France and it.

Ant. S. Where Spain?

Dro. S. Faith, I saw it not; but I felt it hot in her breath.

Ant. S. Where America, the Indies?

Dro. S. O, sir, upon her nose, all o'er embellished with rubies, carbuncles, sapphires, declining their rich aspect to the hot breath of Spain, who sent whole armadoes of carracks¹ to be ballast at her nose.

Ant. S. Where stood Belgia, the Netherlands?

Dro. S. O, sir, I did not look so low. To conclude, this drudge, or diviner, laid claim to me; called me Dromio; swore I was assured² to her; told me what privy marks I had about me, as the mark of my shoulder, the mole in my neck, the great wart on my left arm; that I, amazed, ran from her as a witch: and, I think, if my breast had not been made of faith, and my heart of steel, she had transformed me to a curtail-dog,³ and made me turn i' the wheel.

Ant. S. Go, hie thee presently post to the road;
And if the wind blow any way from shore,
I will not harbor in this town to-night.
If any bark put forth, come to the mart,
Where I will walk till thou return to me.
If every one knows us, and we know none,
'Tis time, I think, to trudge, pack, and be gone.

Dro. S. As from a bear a man would run for life,
So fly I from her that would be my wife. [Exit.

¹ Large ships of burden, the same as those called galleons.

² Affianced.

³ A dog that misses his game; and, being of small value, is used as a turn-spit.

Ant. S. There's none but witches do inhabit
here ;
And therefore 'tis high time that I were hence.
She, that doth call me husband, even my soul
Doth for a wife abhor : but her fair sister,
Possess'd with such a gentle sovereign grace,
Of such enchanting presence and discourse,
Hath almost made me traitor to myself :
But, lest myself be guilty to self-wrong,
I'll stop mine ears against the mermaid's song.

Enter ANGELO.

Ang. Master Antipholus ?

Ant. S. Ay, that's my name.

Ang. I know it well, sir. Lo, here is the chain :
I thought to have ta'en you at the Porcupine :
The chain unfinish'd made me stay thus long.

Ant. S. What is your will, that I shall do with
this ?

Ang. What please yourself, sir ; I have made it
for you.

Ant. S. Made it for me, sir ? I bespeak it not.

Ang. Not once, nor twice, but twenty times you
have :

Go home with it, and please your wife withal ;
And soon at supper-time I'll visit you,
And then receive my money for the chain.

Ant. S. I pray you, sir, receive the money now,
For fear you ne'er see chain nor money more.

Ang. You are a merry man, sir ; fare you well.

[*Exit.*]

Ast. S. What I should think of this, I cannot tell ;
But this I think, there 's no man is so vain,
That would refuse so fair an offer'd chain.
I see, a man here needs not live by shifts,
When in the streets he meets such golden gifts.
I 'll to the mart, and there for Dromio stay ;
If any ship put out, then straight away. [Exit.]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The same.

Enter a MERCHANT, ANGELO, and an OFFICER.

Mer. You know, since Pentecost the sum is due,
And since I have not much importuned you ;
Nor now I had not, but that I am bound
To Persia, and want gilders for my voyage :
Therefore make present satisfaction,
Or I 'll attach you by this officer.

Ang. Even just the sum, that I do owe to you,
Is growing¹ to me by Antiphonus :
And, in the instant that I met with you,
He had of me a chain ; at five o'clock,
I shall receive the money for the same.
Pleaseth you walk with me down to his house,
I will discharge my bond, and thank you too.

¹ Accruing.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS and DROMIO OF EPHESUS, from the Courtezan's.

Off. That labor may you save : see where he comes.

Ant. E. While I go to the goldsmith's house, go thou,

And buy a rope's end ; that will I bestow
Among my wife and her confederates,
For locking me out of my doors by day.—
But soft, I see the goldsmith :—get thee gone ;
Buy thou a rope, and bring it home to me.

Dro. E. I buy a thousand pound a year ! I buy a rope ! [Exit Dromio E.

Ant. E. A man is well holp up, that trusts to you :

I promised your presence, and the chain ;
But neither chain nor goldsmith came to me :
Belike, you thought our love would last too long,
If it were chain'd together ; and therefore came not.

Ang. Saving your merry humor, here 's the note,
How much your chain weighs to the utmost caract ;
The fineness of the gold, and chargeful fashion ;
Which doth amount to three odd ducats more
Than I stand debted to this gentleman :
I pray you, see him presently discharged,
For he is bound to sea, and stays but for it.

Ant. E. I am not furnish'd with the present money ;

Besides, I have some business in the town.

Good signior, take the stranger to my house,

And with you take the chain, and bid my wife
Disburse the sum on the receipt thereof.
Perchance, I will be there as soon as you.

Ang. Then you will bring the chain to her yourself?

Ant. E. No; bear it with you, lest I come not time enough.

Ang. Well, sir, I will. Have you the chain about you?

Ant. E. An if I have not, sir, I hope you have;
Or else you may return without your money.

Ang. Nay, come, I pray you, sir, give me the chain;

Both wind and tide stays for this gentleman,
And I, to blame, have held him here too long.

Ant. E. Good lord, you use this dalliance, to excuse

Your breach of promise to the Porcupine:
I should have chid you for not bringing it,
But, like a shrew, you first begin to brawl.

Mer. The hour steals on; I pray you, sir, despatch.

Ang. You hear, how he importunes me; the chain—

Ant. E. Why, give it to my wife, and fetch your money.

Ang. Come, come, you know, I gave it you even now;

Either send the chain, or send me by some token.

Ant. E. Fie! now you run this humor out of breath.

Come, where's the chain? I pray you, let me see it.

Mer. My business cannot brook this dalliance: Good sir, say, whe'r¹ you'll answer me, or no; If not, I'll leave him to the officer.

Ant. E. I answer you! What should I answer you?

Ang. The money, that you owe me for the chain.

Ant. E. I owe you none, till I receive the chain.

Ang. You know, I gave it you half an hour since.

Ant. E. You gave me none; you wrong me much to say so.

Ang. You wrong me more, sir, in denying it: Consider, how it stands upon my credit.

Mer. Well, officer, arrest him at my suit.

Off. I do;

And charge you in the duke's name to obey me.

Ang. This touches me in reputation:— Either consent to pay this sum for me, Or I attach you by this officer.

Ant. E. Consent to pay thee that I never had! Arrest me, foolish fellow, if thou darest.

Ang. Here is thy fee; arrest him, officer: I would not spare my brother in this case, If he should scorn me so apparently.

Off. I do arrest you, sir; you hear the suit.

Ant. E. I do obey thee, till I give thee bail: But, sirrah, you shall buy this sport as dear

¹ Whether.

As all the metal in your shop will answer.

Ang. Sir, sir, I shall have law in Ephesus,
To your notorious shame, I doubt it not.

Enter DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Dro. S. Master, there is a bark of Epidamnum,
That stays but till her owner comes aboard,
And then, sir, she bears away: our fraughtage,¹ sir,
I have convey'd aboard; and I have bought
The oil, the balsamum, and aqua vitae.
The ship is in her trim; the merry wind
Blows fair from land: they stay for naught at all,
But for their owner, master, and yourself.

Ant. E. How now! a madman! Why, thou
peevish² sheep,
What ship of Epidamnum stays for me?

Dro. S. A ship you sent me to, to hire waftage.³

Ant. E. Thou drunken slave, I sent thee for a
rope,

And told thee to what purpose and what end.

Dro. S. You sent me for a rope's end as soon:
You sent me to the bay, sir, for a bark.

Ant. E. I will debate this matter at more leisure,
And teach your ears to list me with more heed.
To Adriana, villain, hie thee straight:
Give her this key, and tell her, in the desk
That's cover'd o'er with Turkish tapestry,
There is a purse of ducats: let her send it.

¹ Lading, cargo.

² Silly.

³ Carriage.

Tell her, I am arrested in the street,
And that shall bail me : hie thee, slave ; be gone.
On, officer, to prison till it come.

[*Exeunt Merchant, Angelo, Officer, and Ant. E.*

Dro. S. To Adriana ! that is where we dined,
Where Dowsabel did claim me for her husband :
She is too big, I hope, for me to compass.
Thither I must, although against my will ;
For servants must their masters' minds fulfil. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The same.

Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA.

Adr. Ah, Luciana, did he tempt thee so ?

Mightst thou perceive austerely in his eye
That he did plead in earnest, yea or no ?

Look'd he or red, or pale ; or sad, or merrily ?
What observation madest thou in this case,
Of his heart's meteors tilting in his face ?¹

Luc. First, he denied you had in him no right.

Adr. He meant, he did me none ; the more my
spite.

Luc. Then swore he, that he was a stranger here.

Adr. And true he swore, though yet forsown he
were.

Luc. Then pleaded I for you.

¹ In allusion to the northern lights, which have the appearance of armies meeting in the shock.

Adr.

And what said he?

Luc. That love I begg'd for you, he begg'd of me.

Adr. With what persuasion did he tempt thy love?

Luc. With words, that in an honest suit might move.

First, he did praise my beauty; then, my speech.

Adr. Didst speak him fair?

Luc. Have patience, I beseech.

Adr. I cannot, nor I will not, hold me still:

My tongue, though not my heart, shall have his will.

He is deformed, crooked, old, and sere.¹

Ill-faced, worse bodied, shapeless every where;

Vicious, ungentle, foolish, blunt, unkind;

Stigmatical in making,² worse in mind.

Luc. Who would be jealous then of such a one?

No evil lost is wail'd when it is gone.

Adr. Ah! but I think him better than I say,

And yet would herein others' eyes were worse:
Far from her nest the lapwing cries away:³

My heart prays for him, though my tongue do curse.

Enter DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Dro. S. Here, go; the desk, the purse; sweet now, make haste.

¹ Dry, withered. ² Stigmatised by nature with deformity.

³ The lapwings fly, with seeming fright, far from their nests, to deceive those who seek their young.

Luc. How hast thou lost thy breath?

Dro. S. By running fast.

Adr. Where is thy master, Dromio? is he well?

Dro. S. No, he's in Tartar limbo, worse than
hell:

A devil in an everlasting garment¹ hath him,
One, whose hard heart is button'd up with steel;
A fiend, a fairy, pitiless and rough;
A wolf, nay, worse, a fellow all in buff;
A back-friend, a shoulder-clapper, one that coun-
termands

The passages of alleys, creeks, and narrow lands;
A hound that runs counter,² and yet draws dry-foot³
well:

One that, before the judgment, carries poor souls to
hell.⁴

Adr. Why, man, what is the matter?

Dro. S. I do not know the matter; he is 'rested
on the case.'⁵

Adr. What, is he arrested? tell me, at whose suit.

Dro. S. I know not at whose suit he is arrested,
well;

But is in a suit of buff, which 'rested' him; that I
can tell.

¹ Officers of justice were formerly clad in buff, which is also a cant term for a man's skin.

² Quibble on the word 'counter,' which means the wrong way in the chase, and a well-known prison in London.

³ Follows men by the scent. ⁴ A cant term for a prison.

⁵ A general action for the redress of a wrong not especially provided for by law.

Will you send him, mistress, redemption, the money
in his desk?

Adr. Go fetch it, sister.—This I wonder at;

[*Exit Luciana.*

That he, unknown to me, should be in debt.—

Tell me, was he arrested on a band? ¹

Dro. S. Not on a band, but on a stronger thing;
A chain, a chain; do you not hear it ring?

Adr. What, the chain?

Dro. S. No, no, the bell: 'tis time, that I were
gone.

It was two ere I left him, and now the clock strikes
one.

Adr. The hours come back! that did I never hear.

Dro. S. O yes, if any hour meet a serjeant, a'
turns back for very fear.

Adr. As if time were in debt! how fondly dost
thou reason!

Dro. S. Time is a very bankrout, and owes more
than he's worth to season.

Nay, he's a thief too. Have you not heard men say,
That time comes stealing on by night and day?

If he be in debt, and theft, and a serjeant in the
way,

Hath he not reason to turn back an hour in a day?

Enter LUCIANA.

Adr. Go, Dromio; there's the money: bear it
straight,

And bring thy master home immediately.—

¹ Bond.

Come, sister ; I am press'd down with conceit ;¹
Conceit, my comfort, and my injury. [Exit.]

SCENE III.

The same.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE.

Ant. S. There's not a man I meet, but doth
salute me
As if I were their well-acquainted friend ;
And every one doth call me by my name.
Some tender money to me, some invite me ;
Some other give me thanks for kindnesses ;
Some offer me commodities to buy.
Even now a tailor call'd me in his shop,
And show'd me silks that he had bought for me,
And, therewithal, took measure of my body.
Sure, these are but imaginary wiles,
And Lapland sorcerers inhabit here.

Enter DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Dro. S. Master, here's the gold you sent me for.
What, have you got rid of the picture of old Adam
new appareled ?

Ant. S. What gold is this ? what Adam dost thou
mean ?

¹ Fanciful conceptions.

Dro. S. Not that Adam that kept the paradise, but that Adam that keeps the prison : he that goes in the calf's skin that was killed for the prodigal : he that came behind you, sir, like an evil angel, and bid you forsake your liberty.

Ant. S. I understand thee not.

Dro. S. No? why, 'tis a plain case : he that went like a bass-viol, in a case of leather ; the man, sir, that, when gentlemen are tired, gives them a fob, and 'rests them ; he, sir, that takes pity on decayed men, and gives them suits of durance ; he that sets up his rest¹ to do more exploits with his mace, than a morris-pike.²

Ant. S. What ! thou meanest an officer ?

Dro. S. Ay, sir, the serjeant of the band ; he, that brings any man to answer it, that breaks his band ; one that thinks a man always going to bed, and says, 'God give you good rest.'

Ant. S. Well, sir, there rest in your foolery. Is there any ship puts forth to-night ? may we be gone ?

Dro. S. Why, sir, I brought you word an hour since, that the bark Expedition put forth to-night ; and then were you hindered by the serjeant, to tarry for the hoy Delay. Here are the angels that you sent for, to deliver you.

¹ 'Is firmly resolved : a phrase taken from military exercise.'—Malone.

² 'A morris-pike was a pike used in a morris, or military dance.'—Johnson.

Ant. S. The fellow is distract, and so am I ;
And here we wander in illusions.
Some blessed power deliver us from hence !

Enter COURTEZAN.

Cour. Well met, well met, master Antipholus.
I see, sir, you have found the goldsmith now.
Is that the chain, you promised me to-day ?

Ant. S. Satan, avoid ! I charge thee, tempt me
not !

Dro. S. Master, is this mistress Satan ?

Ant. S. It is the devil.

Dro. S. Nay, she is worse, she is the devil's dam;
and here she comes in the habit of a light wench;
and thereof comes, that the wenches say, 'God
damn me,' that 's as much as to say, 'God make me
a light wench.' It is written, they appear to men
like angels of light : light is an effect of fire, and
fire will burn ; *ergo*, light wenches will burn. Come
not near her.

Cour. Your man and you are marvellous merry,
sir.

Will you go with me ? We'll mend our dinner
here.

Dro. S. Master, if you do, expect spoon-meat, or
bespeak a long spoon.

Ant. S. Why, Dromio ?

Dro. S. Marry, he must have a long spoon, that
must eat with the devil.

Ant. S. Avoid then, fiend ! What tell'st thou me
of supping ?

Thou art, as you all are, a sorceress :
I conjure thee to leave me, and be gone.

Cour. Give me the ring of mine you had at dinner,

Or, for my diamond, the chain you promised ;
And I'll be gone, sir, and not trouble you.

Dro. S. Some devils ask but the parings of one's nail,

A rush, a hair, a drop of blood, a pin,
A nut, a cherry-stone ; but she, more covetous,
Would have a chain.

Master, be wise ; and if you give it her,
The devil will shake her chain, and fright us with it.

Cour. I pray you, sir, my ring, or else the chain.
I hope, you do not mean to cheat me so.

Ant. S. Avaunt, thou witch ! Come, Dromio, let us go.

Dro. S. Fly, pride, says the peacock. Mistress, that you know.

[*Exeunt Ant. S. and Dro. S.*

Cour. Now, out of doubt, Antipholus is mad,
Else would he never so demean himself.

A ring he hath of mine worth forty ducats,
And for the same he promised me a chain :
Both one and other he denies me now.
The reason that I gather he is mad,
(Besides this present instance of his rage)
Is a mad tale, he told to-day at dinner,
Of his own doors being shut against his entrance.
Belike, his wife, acquainted with his fits,
On purpose shut the doors against his way.

My way is now, to hie home to his house,
And tell his wife, that, being lunatic,
He rush'd into my house, and took perforce
My ring away. This course I fittest choose ;
For forty ducats is too much to lose. [Exit.]

SCENE IV.

The same.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS and an OFFICER.

Ant. E. Fear me not, man ; I will not break
away ;
I 'll give thee, ere I leave thee, so much money,
To warrant thee, as I am 'rested for.
My wife is in a wayward mood to-day,
And will not lightly trust the messenger,
That I should be attach'd in Ephesus.
I tell you, 'twill sound harshly in her ears.—

Enter DROMIO OF EPHESUS with a rope's end.

Here comes my man : I think, he brings the money.
How now, sir ? have you that I sent you for ?

Dro. E. Here 's that, I warrant you, will pay them
all.¹

Ant. E. But where 's the money.

Dro. E. Why, sir, I gave the money for the rope.

Ant. E. Five hundred ducats, villain, for a rope ?

¹ Correct them all.

Dro. E. I'll serve you, sir, five hundred at the rate.

Ant. E. To what end did I bid thee hie thee home?

Dro. E. To a rope's end, sir; and to that end am I returned.

Ant. E. And to that end, sir, I will welcome you.
[beating him.]

Off. Good sir, be patient.

Dro. E. Nay, 'tis for me to be patient; I am in adversity.

Off. Good now, hold thy tongue.

Dro. E. Nay, rather persuade him to hold his hands.

Ant. E. Thou whoreson, senseless villain!

Dro. E. I would I were senseless, sir, that I might not feel your blows.

Ant. E. Thou art sensible in nothing but blows, and so is an ass.

Dro. E. I am an ass, indeed; you may prove it by my long ears.¹ I have served him from the hour of my nativity to this instant, and have nothing at his hands for my service, but blows: when I am cold, he heats me with beating; when I am warm, he cools me with beating: I am waked with it when I sleep, raised with it when I sit, driven out of doors with it when I go from home, welcomed home with it when I return: nay, I bear it on my shoulders,

¹ Which his master had lengthened by frequently pulling.

as a beggar wont her brat ; and, I think, when he hath lamed me, I shall beg with it from door to door.

Enter ADRIANA, LUCIANA, and the COURTEZAN, with PINCH, and others.

Ant. E. Come, go along ; my wife is coming yonder.

Dro. E. Mistress, *respice finem*, respect your end ; or rather the prophecy, like the parrot, ‘ Beware the rope’s end.’

Ant. E. Wilt thou still talk ? [beats him.]

Cour. How say you now ? is not your husband mad ?

Adr. His incivility confirms no less.—

Good doctor Pinch, you are a conjurer ;
Establish him in his true sense again,
And I will please you what you will demand.

Luc. Alas, how fiery and how sharp he looks !

Cour. Mark, how he trembles in his ecstasy !

Pinch. Give me your hand, and let me feel your pulse.

Ant. E. There is my hand, and let it feel your ear.

Pinch. I charge thee, Satan, housed within this man,

To yield possession to my holy prayers,
And to thy state of darkness hie thee straight ;
I conjure thee by all the saints in heaven.

Ant. E. Peace, doting wizard, peace ; I am not mad.

Adr. O, that thou wert not, poor distressed soul !

Ant. E. You minion, you, are these your customers ?

Did this companion¹ with the saffron face
Revel and feast it at my house to-day,
Whilst upon me the guilty doors were shut,
And I denied to enter in my house ?

Adr. O, husband, God doth know, you dined at home,

Where would you had remain'd until this time,
Free from these slanders and this open shame !

Ant. E. Dined at home ! Thou villain, what say'st thou ?

Dro. E. Sir, sooth to say, you did not dine at home.

Ant. E. Were not my doors lock'd up, and I shut out ?

Dro. E. Perdy,² your doors were lock'd, and you shut out.

Ant. E. And did not she herself revile me there ?

Dro. E. Sans fable,³ she herself reviled you there.

Ant. E. Did not her kitchen-maid rail, taunt, and scorn me ?

Dro. E. Certes,⁴ she did ; the kitchen-vestal scorn'd you.

Ant. E. And did not I in rage depart from thence ?

¹ Fellow. ² A corruption of the French oath, *par Dieu*.

³ Without a fable.

⁴ Certainly.

Dro. E. In verity, you did :—my bones bear witness,
That since have felt the vigor of his rage.

Adr. Is 't good to soothe him in these contraries ?
Pinch. It is no shame ; the fellow finds his vein,

And, yielding to him, humors well his frenzy.

Ant. E. Thou hast suborn'd the goldsmith to arrest me.

Adr. Alas, I sent you money to redeem you, By Dromio here, who came in haste for it.

Dro. E. Money by me ? heart and good-will you might,

But, surely, master, not a rag of money.

Ant. E. Went'st not thou to her for a purse of ducats ?

Adr. He came to me, and I deliver'd it.

Luc. And I am witness with her, that she did.

Dro. E. God and the rope-maker, bear me witness,

That I was sent for nothing but a rope !

Pinch. Mistress, both man and master is possess'd ;

I know it by their pale and deadly looks :

They must be bound, and laid in some dark room.

Ant. E. Say, wherefore didst thou lock me forth to-day,

And why dost thou deny the bag of gold ?

Adr. I did not, gentle husband, lock thee forth !

Dro. E. And, gentle master, I received no gold ; But I confess, sir, that we were lock'd out.

Adr. Dissembling villain, thou speak'st false in both.

Ant. E. Dissembling harlot, thou art false in all ;
And art confederate with a damned pack,
To make a loathsome, abject scorn of me :
But with these nails I'll pluck out these false eyes,
That would behold in me this shameful sport.

[*Pinch and his assistants bind Ant. E. and Dro. E.*

Adr. O, bind him, bind him ; let him not come
near me.

Pinch. More company ;—the fiend is strong within
him.

Luc. Ah me, poor man, how pale and wan he
looks !

Ant. E. What, will you murder me ? Thou jailer,
thou,

I am thy prisoner : wilt thou suffer them
To make a rescue ?

Off. Masters, let him go ;
He is my prisoner, and you shall not have him.

Pinch. Go, bind this man, for he is frantic too.

Adr. What wilt thou do, thou peevish ¹ officer ?
Hast thou delight to see a wretched man
Do outrage and displeasure to himself ?

Off. He is my prisoner ; if I let him go,
The debt he owes will be required of me.

Adr. I will discharge thee, ere I go from thee :
Bear me forthwith unto his creditor ;

¹ Foolish.

And, knowing how the debt grows,¹ I will pay it.
Good master doctor, see him safe convey'd
Home to my house.—O most unhappy day !

Ant. E. O most unhappy ² strumpet !

Dro. E. Master, I am here enter'd in bond for
you.

Ant. E. Out on thee, villain ! wherefore dost thou
mad me ?

Dro. E. Will you be bound for nothing ? be mad,
Good master ; cry, the devil.—

Luc. God help, poor souls, how idly do they
talk !

Adr. Go, bear him hence.—Sister, go you with
me.—

[*Exeunt Pinch and Ass. with Ant. E. and Dro. E.*
Say now, whose suit is he arrested at ?

Off. One Angelo, a goldsmith : do you know
him ?

Adr. I know the man. What is the sum he
owes ?

Off. Two hundred ducats.

Adr. Say, how grows ³ it due ?

Off. Due for a chain your husband had of him.

Adr. He did bespeak a chain for me, but had it
not.

Cour. When as your husband, all in rage, to-day
Came to my house, and took away my ring,
(The ring I saw upon his finger now)

¹ Has accrued.

² For unlucky, i. e. mischievous.

³ Becomes.

Straight after did I meet him with a chain.

Adr. It may be so, but I did never see it.—
Come, jailer, bring me where the goldsmith is ;
I long to know the truth hereof at large.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS OF SYRACUSE, with his rapier drawn, and DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Luc. God, for thy mercy ! they are loose again.

Adr. And come with naked swords : let's call
more help,

To have them bound again.

Off. Away ; they 'll kill us.

[*Exeunt Officer, Adr. and Luc.*

Ant. S. I see, these witches are afraid of swords.

Dro. S. She, that would be your wife, now ran
from you.

Ant. S. Come to the Centaur ; fetch our stuff¹
from thence :

I long, that we were safe and sound aboard.

Dro. S. Faith, stay here this night : they will
surely do us no harm ; you saw, they speak us fair,
give us gold : methinks, they are such a gentle
nation, that but for the mountain of mad flesh that
claims marriage of me, I could find in my heart to
stay here still, and turn witch.

Ant. S. I will not stay to-night for all the town :
Therefore away, to get our stuff aboard. [*Exeunt.*

¹ Baggage..

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The same. Before an abbey.

Enter MERCHANT and ANGELO.

Ang. I am sorry, sir, that I have hinder'd you ;
But, I protest, he had the chain of me,
Though most dishonestly he doth deny it.

Mer. How is the man esteem'd here in the city ?

Ang. Of very reverent reputation, sir ;
Of credit infinite ; highly beloved ;
Second to none that lives here in the city.
His word might bear my wealth at any time.

Mer. Speak softly : yonder, as I think, he walks.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS and DROMIO OF SYRACUSE.

Ang. 'Tis so ; and that self chain about his neck,
Which he forswore, most monstrously, to have.
Good sir, draw near to me, I 'll speak to him.
Signior Antipholus, I wonder much
That you would put me to this shame and trouble ;
And, not without some scandal to yourself,
With circumstance, and oaths, so to deny
This chain, which now you wear so openly :
Beside the charge, the shame, imprisonment,
You have done wrong to this my honest friend,
Who, but for staying on our controversy,
Had hoisted sail, and put to sea to-day.

This chain you had of me ; can you deny it ?

Ant. S. I think, I had ; I never did deny it.

Mer. Yes, that you did, sir ; and forswore it too.

Ant. S. Who heard me to deny it, or forswear it ?

Mer. These ears of mine, thou knowest, did hear thee.

Fie on thee, wretch ! 'tis pity, that thou livest
To walk where any honest men resort.

Ant. S. Thou art a villain, to impeach me thus :
I 'll prove mine honor and mine honesty
Against thee presently, if thou darest stand.

Mer. I dare, and do defy thee for a villain.

[*they draw.*

Enter ADRIANA, LUCIANA, COURTEZAN, and others.

Adr. Hold, hurt him not, for God's sake ; he is
mad :—

Some get within him,¹ take his sword away :
Bind Dromio too, and bear them to my house.

Dro. S. Run, master, run ; for God's sake, take
a house.²

This is some priory.—In, or we are spoil'd.

[*Exeunt Ant. S. and Dro. S. to the abbey.*

Enter ABBESS.

Abb. Be quiet, people. Wherefore throng you
hither ?

¹ Close, grapple with him.

² Go into a house.

Adr. To fetch my poor distracted husband hence.
Let us come in, that we may bind him fast,
And bear him home for his recovery.

Ang. I knew, he was not in his perfect wits.

Mer. I am sorry now that I did draw on him.

Abb. How long hath this possession held the
man?

Adr. This week he hath been heavy, sour, sad,
And much different from the man he was ;
But, till this afternoon, his passion
Ne'er brake into extremity of rage.

Abb. Hath he not lost much wealth by wreck of
sea ?

Buried some dear friend ? Hath not else his eye
Stray'd his affection in unlawful love ?
A sin prevailing much in youthful men,
Who give their eyes the liberty of gazing.
Which of these sorrows is he subject to ?

Adr. To none of these, except it be the last ;
Namely, some love, that drew him oft from home.

Abb. You should for that have reprehended him.

Adr. Why, so I did.

Abb. Ay, but not rough enough.

Adr. As roughly as my modesty would let me.

Abb. Haply, in private.

Adr. And in assemblies too.

Abb. Ay, but not enough.

Adr. It was the copy¹ of our conference :

¹ Theme.

In bed, he slept not for my urging it;
At board, he fed not for my urging it;
Alone, it was the subject of my theme;
In company, I often glanced it;
Still did I tell him it was vile and bad.

Abb. And thereof came it that the man was mad.
The venom clamors of a jealous woman
Poison more deadly than a mad dog's tooth.
It seems, his sleeps were hinder'd by thy railing;
And thereof comes it that his head is light.
Thou say'st, his meat was sauced with thy up-
braiding:

Unquiet meals make ill digestions,
Thereof the raging fire of fever bred;
And what's a fever but a fit of madness?
Thou say'st, his sports were hinder'd by thy brawls:
Sweet recreation barr'd, what doth ensue,
But moody and dull melancholy,
Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair;
And, at their heels, a huge infectious troop
Of pale distempers, and foes to life?
In food, in sport, and life-preserving rest
To be disturb'd, would mad or man or beast:
The consequence is then, thy jealous fits
Have scared thy husband from the use of wits.

Luc. She never reprehended him but mildly,
When he demean'd himself rough, rude, and
wildly.—

Why bear you these rebukes, and answer not?

Adr. She did betray me to my own reproof.—
Good people, enter, and lay hold on him.

Abb. No, not a creature enters in my house.

Adr. Then let your servants bring my husband forth.

Abb. Neither : he took this place for sanctuary,
And it shall privilege him from your hands,
Till I have brought him to his wits again,
Or lose my labor in assaying it.

Adr. I will attend my husband, be his nurse,
Diet his sickness, for it is my office,
And will have no attorney but myself ;
And therefore let me have him home with me.

Abb. Be patient ; for I will not let him stir,
Till I have used the approved means I have,
With wholesome sirups, drugs, and holy prayers,
To make of him a formal man again : ¹
It is a branch and parcel of mine oath,
A charitable duty of my order :
Therefore depart, and leave him here with me.

Adr. I will not hence, and leave my husband
here ;
And ill it doth beseem your holiness,
To separate the husband and the wife.

Abb. Be quiet, and depart ; thou shalt not have
him. [Exit Abbess.]

Luc. Complain unto the duke of this indignity.

Adr. Come, go ; I will fall prostrate at his feet,
And never rise until my tears and prayers
Have won his grace to come in person hither,

¹ To bring him back to his senses.

And take perforce my husband from the abbess.

Mer. By this, I think, the dial points at five :
Anon, I am sure, the duke himself in person
Comes this way to the melancholy vale ;
The place of death and sorry¹ execution,
Behind the ditches of the abbey here.

Ang. Upon what cause ?

Mer. To see a reverend Syracusian merchant,
Who put unluckily into this bay
Against the laws and statutes of this town,
Beheaded publicly for his offence.

Ang. See, where they come : we will behold his
death.

Luc. Kneel to the duke, before he pass the abbey.

*Enter DUKE attended ; MGRON bare-headed ; with the
Headsman and other officers.*

Duke. Yet once again proclaim it publicly,
If any friend will pay the sum for him,
He shall not die, so much we tender him.

Adr. Justice, most sacred duke, against the
abbess !

Duke. She is a virtuous and a reverend lady :
It cannot be, that she hath done thee wrong.

Adr. May it please your grace, Antipholus, my
husband,—
Whom I made lord of me and all I had,
At your important² letters,—this ill day

¹ Sad.

² Importunate.

A most outrageous fit of madness took him ;
That desperately he hurried through the street,
(With him his bondman, all as mad as he)
Doing displeasure to the citizens
By rushing in their houses, bearing thence
Rings, jewels, any thing his rage did like.
Once did I get him bound, and sent him home,
Whilst to take order ¹ for the wrongs I went,
That here and there his fury had committed.
Anon, I wot not by what strong escape,
He broke from those that had the guard of him ;
And, with his mad attendant and himself,
Each one with ireful passion, with drawn swords,
Met us again, and, madly bent on us,
Chased us away ; till, raising of more aid,
We came again to bind them : then they fled
Into this abbey, whither we pursued them ;
And here the abbess shuts the gates on us,
And will not suffer us to fetch him out,
Nor send him forth, that we may bear him hence.
Therefore, most gracious duke, with thy command,
Let him be brought forth, and borne hence for help.

Duke. Long since, thy husband served me in my
wars ;
And I to thee engaged a prince's word,
When thou didst make him master of thy bed,
To do him all the grace and good I could.—
Go, some of you, knock at the abbey-gate,

¹ Measures.

And bid the lady abbess come to me.
I will determine this before I stir.

Enter a SERVANT.

Ser. O mistress, mistress, shift and save yourself !
My master and his man are both broke loose,
Beaten the maids a-row,¹ and bound the doctor,
Whose beard they have singed off with brands of
fire ;
And, ever as it blazed, they threw on him
Great pails of puddled mire to quench the hair.
My master preaches patience to him, and the while
His man with scissors nicks him ² like a fool :
And, sure, unless you send some present help,
Between them they will kill the conjurer.

Adr. Peace, fool, thy master and his man are
here ;
And that is false thou dost report to us.

Ser. Mistress, upon my life, I tell you true ;
I have not breathed almost, since I did see it.
He cries for you, and vows, if he can take you,
To scorch your face, and to disfigure you. *

[*cry within.*
Hark, hark, I hear him, mistress : fly, be gone.

Duke. Come, stand by me ; fear nothing. Guard
with halberds.

Adr. Ah me, it is my husband ! Witness you,

¹ Successively, one after another.

² Cuts his hair close.

That he is borne about invisible.
Even now we housed him in the abbey here;
And now he's there, past thought of human reason.

Enter ANTIPHOLUS and DROMIO OF EPHESUS.

Ant. E. Justice, most gracious duke, O, grant me
justice!

Even for the service that long since I did thee,
When I bestrid thee in the wars, and took
Deep scars to save thy life; even for the blood
That then I lost for thee, now grant me justice.

Aegeon. Unless the fear of death doth make me
dote,

I see my son Antipholus, and Dromio. [aside.]

Ant. E. Justice, sweet prince, against that woman
there;

She whom thou gavest to me to be my wife,
That hath abused and dishonor'd me,
Even in the strength and height of injury!
Beyond imagination is the wrong,
That she this day hath shameless thrown on me.

Duke. Discover how, and thou shalt find me just.

Ant. E. This day, great duke, she shut the doors
upon me,

While she with harlots¹ feasted in my house.

Duke. A grievous fault. Say, woman, didst thou
so?

¹ Harlot was a term of reproach, applied to cheats among men, as well as to wantons among women.

Adr. No, my good lord;—myself, he, and my sister,
To-day did dine together. So befall my soul,
As this is false, he burdens me withal!

Luc. Ne'er may I look on day, nor sleep on night,
But she tells to your highness simple truth!

Ang. O perjured woman! They are both forsworn:

In this the madman justly chargeth them.

Ant. E. My liege, I am advised what I say;
Neither disturb'd with the effect of wine,
Nor heady-rash, provoked with raging ire,
Albeit my wrongs might make one wiser mad.
This woman lock'd me out this day from dinner:
That goldsmith there, were he not pack'd with her,
Could witness it, for he was with me then,
Who parted with me to go fetch a chain,
Promising to bring it to the Porcupine,
Where Balthazar and I did dine together.
Our dinner done, and he not coming thither,
I went to seek him: in the street I met him;
And in his company, that gentleman.
There did this perjured goldsmith swear me down,
That I this day of him received the chain,
Which, God he knows, I saw not; for the which,
He did arrest me with an officer.
I did obey; and sent my peasant home
For certain ducats: he with none return'd.
Then fairly I bespoke the officer,
To go in person with me to my house.
By the way we met

My wife, her sister, and a rabble more
Of vile confederates ; along with them
They brought one Pinch, a hungry, lean-faced
villain,
A mere anatomy, a mountebank,
A thread-bare juggler, and a fortune-teller ;
A needy, hollow-eyed, sharp-looking wretch,
A living dead man : this pernicious slave,
Forsooth, took on him as a conjurer ;
And, gazing in mine eyes, feeling my pulse,
And with no face, as 'twere, outfacing me,
Cries out, I was possess'd : then altogether
They fell upon me, bound me, bore me thence ;
And in a dark and dankish vault at home
There left me and my man, both bound together ;
Till gnawing with my teeth my bonds in sunder,
I gain'd my freedom, and immediately
Ran hither to your grace, whom I beseech
To give me ample satisfaction
For these deep shames and great indignities.

Ang. My lord, in truth, thus far I witness with
him ;
That he dined not at home, but was lock'd out.

Duke. But had he such a chain of thee, or no ?
Ang. He had, my lord ; and when he ran in here,
These people saw the chain about his neck.

Mer. Besides, I will be sworn, these ears of mine
Hear you confess you had the chain of him,
After you first forswore it on the mart ;
And, thereupon, I drew my sword on you ;
And then you fled into this abbey here,

From whence, I think, you are come by miracle.

Ant. E. I never came within these abbey walls,
Nor ever didst thou draw thy sword on me :
I never saw the chain, so help me, Heaven !
And this is false, you burden me withal.

Duke. Why, what an intricate impeach is this !
I think, you all have drunk of Circe's cup.¹
If here you housed him, here he would have been ;
If he were mad, he would not plead so coldly.—
You say, he dined at home ; the goldsmith here
Denies that saying.—Sirrah, what say you ?

Dro. E. Sir, he dined with her there, at the Porcupine.

Cour. He did ; and from my finger snatch'd that ring.

Ant. E. 'Tis true, my liege ; this ring I had of her.

Duke. Saw'st thou him enter at the abbey here ?

Cour. As sure, my liege, as I do see your grace.

Duke. Why, this is strange.—Go, call the abbess hither :

I think you are all mated,² or stark mad.

[*Exit an Attendant.*

Aegeon. Most mighty duke, vouchsafe me speak a word :

Haply I see a friend will save my life,
And pay the sum that may deliver me.

Duke. Speak freely, Syracusian, what thou wilt.

¹ Which is said to have transformed the companions of Ulysses into swine. ² Confounded.

Ægeon. Is not your name, sir, call'd Antipholus ?
And is not that your bondman Dromio ?

Dro. E. Within this hour I was his bondman,
sir,

But he, I thank him, gnaw'd in two my cords :
Now am I Dromio, and his man, unbound.

Ægeon. I am sure, you both of you remember
me.

Dro. E. Ourselves we do remember, sir, by you ;
For lately we were bound as you are now.
You are not Pinch's patient, are you, sir ?

Ægeon. Why look you strange on me ? you know
me well.

Ant. E. I never saw you in my life till now.

Ægeon. O ! grief hath changed me since you saw
me last ;
And careful hours,¹ with Time's deformed² hand,
Have written strange defeatures³ in my face.
But tell me yet, dost thou not know my voice ?

Ant. E. Neither.

Ægeon. Dromio, nor thou ?

Dro. E. No, trust me, sir, nor I.

Ægeon. I am sure, thou dost.

Dro. E. Ay, sir ? but I am sure I do not ; and
whatsoever a man denies, you are now bound to be-
lieve him.

Ægeon. Not know my voice ! O, time's extre-
mity !

¹ Hours of distress and sorrow.

² Deforming.

³ Alteration of features.

Hast thou so crack'd and splitted my poor tongue,
 In seven short years, that here my only son
 Knows not my feeble key of untuned cares ?¹
 Thongh now this grained² face of mine be hid
 In sap-consuming winter's drizzled snow,
 And all the conduits of my blood froze up ;
 Yet hath my night of life some memory,
 My wasting lamp some fading glimmer left,
 My dull deaf ears a little use to hear :
 All these old witnesses (I cannot err)
 Tell me, thou art my son Antipholus.

Ant. E. I never saw my father in my life.

Egeon. But seven years since, in Syracusa, boy,
 Thou know'st, we parted : but, perhaps, my son,
 Thou shamest to acknowlege me in misery.

Ant. E. The duke, and all that know me in the
 city,

Can witness with me that it is not so :
 I ne'er saw Syracusa in my life.

Duke. I tell thee, Syracusian, twenty years
 Have I been patron to Antipholus,
 During which time he ne'er saw Syracusa.
 I see, thy age and dangers make thee dote.

*Enter ABBESS, with ANTIPHOLUS and DROMIO OF
 SYRACUSE.*

Abb. Most mighty duke, behold a man much
 wrong'd. [all gather to see him.]

¹ The weak and discordant tone of my voice, that is changed
 by grief. ² Furrowed.

Adr. I see two husbands, or mine eyes deceive me.

Duke. One of these men is Genius to the other ;
And so of these. Which is the natural man,
And which the spirit ? Who deciphers them ?

Dro. S. I, sir, am Dromio ; command him away.

Dro. E. I, sir, am Dromio ; pray, let me stay.

Ant. S. *Ægeon*, art thou not, or else his ghost ?

Dro. S. O, my old master ! who hath bound him
here ?

Abb. Whoever bound him, I will loose his bonds,
And gain a husband by his liberty.

Speak, old *Ægeon*, if thou be'st the man
That hadst a wife once call'd *Æmilia*,
That bore thee at a burden two fair sons.
O, if thou be'st the same *Ægeon*, speak,
And speak unto the same *Æmilia* !

Ægeon. If I dream not, thou art *Æmilia*.
If thou art she, tell me, where is that son
That floated with thee on the fatal raft ?

Abb. By men of Epidamnum, he, and I,
And the twin Dromio, all were taken up ;
But, by and by, rude fishermen of Corinth
By force took Dromio and my son from them,
And me they left with those of Epidamnum :
What then became of them I cannot tell ;
I, to this fortune that you see me in.

Duke. Why, here begins his morning story
right :¹

¹ The morning story is what *Ægeon* tells the Duke in the first scene of this play.

These two Antipholuses, these two so like,
And these two Dromios, one in semblance,—
Besides her urging of her wreck at sea,—
These are the parents to these children,
Which accidentally are met together.
Antipholus, thou camest from Corinth first.

Ant. S. No, sir, not I ; I came from Syracuse.

Duke. Stay, stand apart ; I know not which is
which.

Ant. E. I came from Corinth, my most gracious
lord.

Drom. E. And I with him.

Ant. E. Brought to this town by that most
famous warrior,

Duke Menaphon, your most renowned uncle.

Adr. Which of you two did dine with me to-day ?

Ant. S. I, gentle mistress.

Adr. And are not you my husband ?

Ant. E. No, I say nay to that.

Ant. S. And so do I : yet did she call me so ;
And this fair gentlewoman, her sister here,
Did call me brother.—What I told you then,
I hope, I shall have leisure to make good,
If this be not a dream I see and hear.

Ang. That is the chain, sir, which you had of me.

Ant. S. I think it be, sir ; I deny it not.

Ant. E. And you, sir, for this chain arrested me.

Ang. I think I did, sir ; I deny it not.

Adr. I sent you money, sir, to be your bail,
By Dromio ; but I think he brought it not.

Drom. E. No, none by me.

Ant. S. This purse of ducats I received from you,
And Dromio my man did bring them me.
I see, we still did meet each other's man,
And I was ta'en for him, and he for me ;
And thereupon these errors are arose.

Ant. E. These ducats pawn I for my father here.

Duke. It shall not need ; thy father hath his life.

Cour. Sir, I must have that diamond from you.

Ant. E. There, take it ; and much thanks for my
good cheer.

Abb. Renowned duke, vouchsafe to take the pains
To go with us into the abbey here,
And hear at large discoursed all our fortunes :—
And all that are assembled in this place,
That by this sympathised one day's error
Have suffer'd wrong, go, keep us company,
And we shall make full satisfaction.—
Twenty-five years have I but gone in travail
Of you, my sons ; until this present hour,
My heavy burden not delivered.—
The duke, my husband, and my children both,
And you, the calendars of their nativity,¹
Go to a gossip's feast, and go with me ;
After so long grief such nativity !

Duke. With all my heart, I 'll gossip at this feast.

[*Exeunt Duke, Abbess, Ægeon, Courtezan,*
Merchant, Angelo, and Attendants.

¹ Addressing the two Dromios, who were born on the same day with their masters.

Dro. S. Master, shall I fetch your stuff¹ from ship-board?

Ant. E. Dromio, what stuff of mine hast thou embark'd?

Dro. S. Your goods, that lay at host, sir, in the Centaur.

Ant. S. He speaks to me. I am your master, Dromio.

Come, go with us; we'll look to that anon:
Embrace thy brother there; rejoice with him.

[*Exeunt Ant. S. and E. Adr. and Luc.*

Dro. S. There is a fat friend at your master's house,

That kitchen'd me for you to-day at dinner:
She now shall be my sister, not my wife.

Dro. E. Methinks, you are my glass, and not my brother.

I see by you, I am a sweet-faced youth.
Will you walk in to see their gossiping?

Dro. S. Not I, sir; you are my elder.

Dro. E. That's a question: how shall we try it?

Dro. S. We'll draw cuts for the senior: till then,
lead thou first.

Dro. E. Nay, then thus:
We came into the world like brother and brother;
And now let's go hand in hand, not one before another.

[*Exeunt.*

¹ Baggage.



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NOV 30 '46

Rec'd NOV 27 '46

